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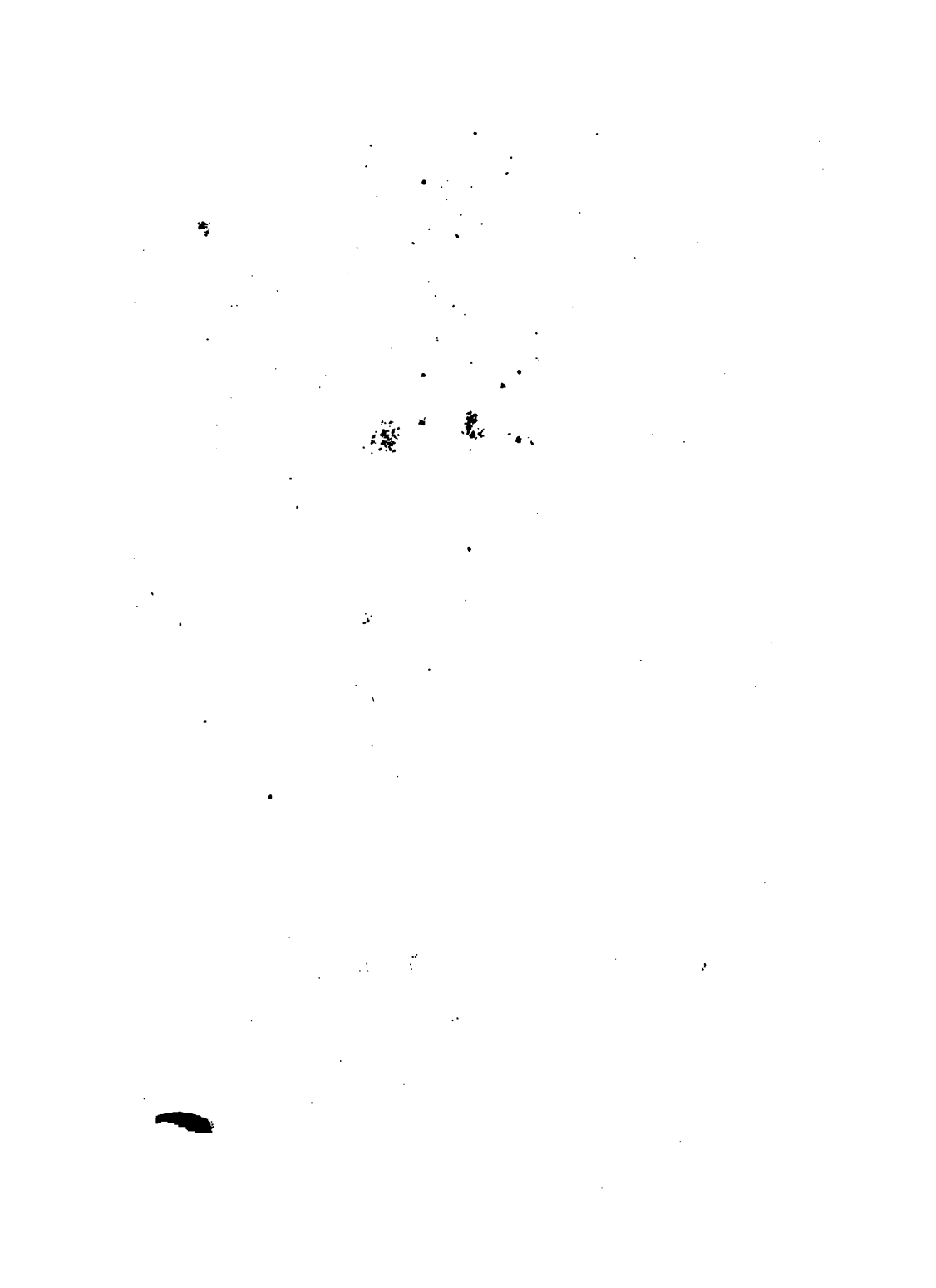
HUMAN POWER

IN THE DIVINE LIFE



BISHOP





Human Power in the Divine Life.

Human Power in the Divine Life;

OR,

The Active Powers of the Mind

IN

Relation to Religion.

BY

REV. NICHOLAS BISHOP, M.A.

"Two things fill me with awe—the starry heavens above me and the sense
of moral responsibility within me."—*Kant*.



London :

HODDER & STOUGHTON,
27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXXI.

141. j. 147.

*Butler & Tanner,
The Selwood Printing Works,
Frome, and London.*

P R E F A C E.


THE design of the present work is to consider the Active Powers of the Mind in their relation to the Divine Life, their adaptation to the requirements of the Divine Law, and to the sense of Human Responsibility.

We can only exercise power to the extent that we are conscious of possessing it. The development and perfection of the Christian Life in us will depend upon the strength of our conviction that we possess the ability to comply with its conditions. Nothing can produce any practical effect upon that life which does not awaken a clear sense of moral agency; and, consequently, it is as necessary to become acquainted with the various faculties of the mind as to understand the teachings of Divine Truth.

Most of the errors of the present time, in

relation to the Christian Life, have arisen out of the false philosophy of the past ages ; and in many instances we have failed to see the light of Divine Truth amidst the clouds of human passion and prejudice. We have not considered carefully whether the facts of consciousness have been in accordance with the Philosophy of the Bible. We have allowed our Theology to be corrupted by false heathen systems of Philosophy, and have taken it for granted that there can be no true Philosophy of Religion.

The present time is more favourable than any period of the past for the study of this subject. There is more independent inquiry, deeper research for facts, and less regard for mere authority. The influence of the Inductive Philosophy is, perhaps, even greater upon mental than upon physical science ; and, consequently, its power must be very great upon Theology. The more thoughtful students are beginning to discover, by this method, that the



PREFACE.


temple of Christian Truth has been almost buried beneath the rubbish of human speculation, and that they cannot open the door until a vast amount of accumulated error has been cleared away.

Those who disparage Mental and Moral Philosophy most have generally given to it the least attention. Those who attach so much more importance to the study of Theology than Philosophy overlook the extent to which Theology consists in the principles of the human mind applied to Divine Truth ; and that, in the greater part of Theology, we can only reason from the facts, grow from the elements, be governed by the laws, and speak in the language of Philosophy.

One of the first conditions of all intelligent intercourse is to understand the terms employed. Most of the darkness and confusion in the views of sincere Christian men arises from the want of clearness in the expression of their thoughts. They frequently mean the same thing, but at-

tach a different notion to the terms they employ. And the difference increases in importance with increase of knowledge, because the distance becomes greater in the degree in which the language of Philosophy becomes fixed, and there is no fixed correspondence in the language of Theology.

It is impossible to approach this subject free from the bias which the circumstances in which we have been placed have given to the mind. We often determine to do so, and are resolved to go to the Fountain-Head of truth, regardless of human systems ; but we can no more separate from the mind its religious prejudices than we can sever from the body its shadow. Like our national characteristics, they insensibly give a colouring to all our views of truth. My work, however, is an attempt to examine as far as possible, by a process of induction, the natural principles of the mind in relation to Divine truth. My object will be less to expose error than to present the truth ; less to fight




over again the old battles than to carry away the spoils of victory ; less to struggle with those giants that have been of old, men of renown, than to claim heirship to the conquests they have won, and the rich inheritance they have left the world.

I am convinced that the progress of knowledge in Theology, more than in any other branch of study, has been retarded by contending with men rather than with principles, with theories rather than with facts, with the value of the opinions of great thinkers rather than with what is intrinsically good in their thoughts. The history of truth has too often been a battle for the glory of our ancestors, in which we have cared much more about the heroes who have fought than the triumphs they have gained. The spirit of antagonism is not the true spirit of inquiry. Controversy often produces more heat than light, and the flame of passion too frequently consumes the life of thought.

It must be admitted that we have not many

books on this subject adapted to modern thought. We have had systems of Philosophy, without reference to man's spiritual nature ; we have had dogmatic Theology, without the facts of consciousness ; or we have had the natural discipline of the mind, without the operations of the Divine Spirit. More has been said about abstract forms of thought than about concrete realities. More has been written about what human nature *ought* to be, in order to reach perfection according to some ideal, than about what is necessary to give perfection to it as it actually exists. Many questions might be easily settled if we could first determine the facts out of which they have arisen, and what is meant by the terms employed. All truth is simple and consistent when we clearly understand its first principles.

Lord Bacon has said, that the usual method of discovery and proof, by first establishing the most general propositions, then applying and proving the intermediate axioms according to



these, is the parent of error and the calamity of every science. This is especially true in reference to Theology. In this, the profoundest subject of human thought, many have altogether disregarded both the facts of consciousness and the facts of Divine truth. All truth, whether secular or religious, rests upon the same foundation, and is subject to the same laws. There is but one law for the discovery of truth, in the physical, in the mental, and in the spiritual world. *We can only understand each world by first understanding its facts;* and the data which these furnish must ever be the sole basis of deduction.

I am painfully conscious of my inability to do justice to this important subject, and I would not have attempted it had I been acquainted with any work which answers the questions here propounded. I speak simply because I am convinced that some one ought to speak, and because, if others have spoken, I have not heard them.

I have aimed at meeting the wants of sincere

inquirers rather than of critics, of Christians rather than of philosophers, of those who read a book for its thoughts rather than for its style. If I can contribute anything to a clearer knowledge of the Divine life; if I can aid those who, like myself, have for years been perplexed by expressions in Theology which have no corresponding language in the Philosophy of the Human Mind; who, instead of walking in the light as God is in the light, have been lost in the darkness of Human error; if I can increase the sense of Human Responsibility, and quicken the dormant faculties of the mind into the consciousness of greater power to fulfil the conditions of the perfect Christian Life,—I shall be more than repaid for my labour.

My prayer is, that what is false in my book may die, and that what is true in it may receive the blessing of Him who is the Truth.

N. B.

*5, Argyle Square, King's Cross,
London, W.C.*

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CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS.

"The object of criticism is not religion, natural or revealed, but the human mind in relation to religion."—*Mansel.*

"On more than one occasion, we have ventured to suggest that the great want of the coming age would prove to be, a theology, possessing such aptitude and freedom as to admit of being brought into healthy relationship with the best forms of ethical and mental science."—*Dr. R. Vaughan.*

IN the works of God provision is everywhere made for their sustenance, growth, and maturity. Everything in Nature seems to be placed in those conditions in which it is best adapted to the end for which it was created, and to possess within itself the forces necessary for its perfection. Would it, then, be reasonable to suppose that man, the highest work of God, could be an exception to this law? Can

we think that it is more difficult for the Infinite Creator to perfect the highest than the lowest of His creatures? or that, owing to the Depravity of Human Nature, there has been any deterioration which places it beyond the Divine Power? or that God could not supply the necessary conditions upon which the perfection of a Free Agent depends? Is man conscious, amidst all the forces around him, of possessing a Self-determining power, by which he can subject to himself all that is essential for his perfection and happiness; and is it reasonable to hold him responsible for the formation of a Holy Character and for the manifestation of a Holy Life?

We shall take a general view of some of the principles involved in these questions.

SECTION I.

THE NATURE OF POWER IN THE HUMAN MIND.

The word Power [*δύναμις*], as used in the New Testament, when applied to the human mind, signifies a certain Causative Force, by which we can fulfil all the conditions of the Divine Law,

and all the requirements of the Divine Life. It implies not only that natural voluntary force which every man as a Moral Agent possesses, to which both God and man appeal, and which constitutes the foundation of Moral Government ; but, also, that the conditions of the Mind are so perfect in relation to the Divine Life that all its exercises become natural exercises.

Three kinds of Force are natural to man—Vital-force, Nerve-force, and Mind-force. These forces act and react upon each other, and constitute, in fact, the necessary conditions of all action. If there be a lack of vital-force, the nervous system will suffer proportionately ; if there be not a proper supply of nervous energy, the Mind will lose a corresponding amount of strength and vigour ; or if the material of thought be not furnished to the Mind, it accordingly has no power of growth or development. Man can only reach perfection as these conditions are perfected.

But, whilst the Mind is limited by its conditions, it has power to choose or to refuse to exercise the forces by which it shall be governed ; and, whilst it can be responsible only so far as these forces are under its control, they may, when within its power, become conversely the

spring of all action. This is a universal law in the physical, mental, and spiritual world.

“Man,” says Sir William Hamilton, “is to some extent necessitated by matter, and is in a sense the slave of necessity. But what man holds of matter does not make up his personality. They are his, not he; man is not an organism,—he is an intelligence served by organs.”¹

The spontaneity of man differs from that of all other animals. All merely instinctive life is impelled to action, without an intelligent plan; but human life, whilst in its lower forms it is removed but little from mere impulse, in its higher manifestations emerges into the light of Reason, and is directed by the co-operation of all the faculties of the Mind to a specific end. Will and Passion are antithetical. As we are governed by strong Passion, we sink to the lower animals; and, as we control our inclinations by our Reason and Conscience, we rise to all that is distinctive in a Free Agent.

Will does not consist merely in the power of spontaneous action—all animals possess that—

¹ Lect. on Met., vol. i., p. 29.

but in such action being under the dominion of the higher faculties. Every individual embodies in himself the entire essence of humanity ; but it is only in the degree in which we apply the several faculties to the great principles of righteous law that we can, strictly speaking, be called free. The standard of liberty in the Mind is not its freedom from control, but the right control of its freedom, according to the higher nature. The standard of the Mind's freedom is not its capacity, but its quality, and all virtue must ever be estimated by the Mind's action in harmony with truth.

In this we see the law of the Human Mind applied to the Divine Life. *The fruit of the Spirit*, like the fruit of a tree—which can only be produced through its trunk, branches, and sap-vessels—cannot be human without the co-operation of all the natural faculties of the Mind. All the influences of the Holy Spirit come through the Active Powers of the Mind. The perfection of the Divine Life consists in the whole of our native energies being employed for God, in accordance with the laws of Divine Truth, and the work of the Holy Spirit renewing it from the elements of that truth.

No one can doubt God's power to act directly upon the mind through its several faculties; but that He has chosen to act indirectly seems equally certain. The spiritual birth resembles the natural birth. Every human being comes into existence with a distinct individuality impressed upon him, but without any actually existing ideas. He is placed at birth in the midst of a system of things perfectly adapted to his nature and organization. The mutual action and reaction which take place between the soul and the outward world, through the medium of the nervous system, furnish him with the primary material of all his ideas in reference to that world. And in the like manner God's Holy Word, and the teachings of the Holy Spirit in connection with that Word, constitute the necessary material, through the same laws of the Mind, for the perfection of the Holy Life.

There are only three sources from which all knowledge can possibly be derived, viz. Self-consciousness, Sense-consciousness, and God-consciousness—being the inner and outer sense in relation to body, soul, and spirit. But no one of these could give us an idea or a perception without the operation of the several faculties of

the mind upon the phenomena presented. The first presentation of the material of our ideas is the signal for the great law of the intelligence to come into operation. As the Vital-force is adapted to call into action all our physical nature, and the Mind-force all our psychical nature—starting in its definite individuality with the possession of primordial powers and susceptibilities, corresponding with the world in which we are placed—like the germ in the plant, operating to realize its distinct individuality and to unfold its natural beauties—so we can choose the elements of the character we wish to form and the life which we wish to live.

We see in the investigations of natural science physical forces standing in the closest correlation to each other. Gravitation, mechanical power, heat, light, electricity, magnetism, etc., may with but few exceptions be transformed into each other. In all the forces of the Mind there is a similar law of action and reaction, producing motive power to mental and moral action. Just as heat produces steam, and friction generates heat, so in the exercise of the several functions of the Mind, everything that influences the Mind tends to produce excitement, either in the Intelligence, the Sensibility, or the Will :

no portion of force being lost in Mind any more than in Matter.¹

In the Divine Life as well as in the Human, whilst every man retains his individuality, and is responsible for the right formation of his character, according to God's plan, any other mode of addressing him than by means of thought and language is not addressing the individual man but some other being, and supposes a miracle. The Will can only choose amongst things of which the Mind takes cognizance, and hence all power in the Divine Life must be limited to our intelligent consciousness. The thought may be often indistinct, and the motive feeble, just as many physical causes may be inefficient; but it is not volition, it is only instinct, or blind impulse, whether in connection with body, soul, or spirit, which does not call into action all the Active Powers of the Mind: the only differences in the Spiritual Life being that, instead of natural laws, the Mind becomes concentrated upon spiritual laws and spiritual purposes.

Moreover, it is a law of the Mind, that when its activities are set in motion, every spring of it

¹ Dr. Morell's *Outlines of Mental Philosophy*, p. 18.

must be necessarily moved. Sir Wm. Hamilton says, "Every mental energy—every thought, feeling, desire, that is excited, excites at the same time all other previously existing activities, in a certain degree ; it spreads its excitation over the whole activities of the Mind, as the agitation of one place of a sheet of water expands itself, in wider and wider circles, over the whole surface of the fluid."¹ Thus, at whatever point the Mind may be excited—whether it be through the Intellect, the Sensibility, or the Will—whether truth enters the Mind from the outward world or by the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit, it is sufficient to call into action the whole complex nature ; and, whenever it is presented with sufficient clearness and force within the range of the action of the Will, it can hold the faculties of the Mind in any position, until the truth can be perfectly analysed, and can be seen in relation to God or man, time or eternity, and until it awakens in the Conscience a sense of right or wrong, of obligation or of no obligation.

In this analysis we discover four classes of phenomena :—the Intelligence, which produces

¹ Lect. on Met., vol. ii., p. 241.

conceptions, laws, rules of action; the Sensibility, which supplies inducements and impulses to action; the Will, which creates effort, activity, the emission of voluntary power; and the Spirit, by which all the other faculties of the Mind become spiritualized, and are brought into immediate dependence upon God Himself—*who is a Spirit*. Beyond this we have little or no knowledge. The mode of the connection of the Mind with both the natural and the spiritual world is involved in a mystery which we are not likely to unfold in the present state. Even if we could, the question is not of so much practical value as we sometimes suppose. All that we require for the attainment of the highest excellence—we know. As the eye sees perfectly when brought into contact with the light, although we cannot understand the subtle laws of vision, and as the Mind perceives clearly when any object is presented to it, although it may be ignorant of the profound principles of thought, so the Spiritual Sense is capable of being called into the most complete exercise when Christ, His Word, and His Spirit, are fully made known.

But, whilst all truth, when first presented, must necessarily be singular and concrete, and

our simplest views are purely Intuitional—mere perceptions of the qualities of truth rather than of its several relations—the Mind cannot put forth its activity without reflecting upon truth, analysing it, comparing it, representing it, and reproducing it in its logical form; and, in the degree in which it continues to act, the Mind must necessarily be brought into harmony with universal truth—the Reason with all that is reasonable, the Sensibility with all that is lovely, the Conscience with all that is right, the Spiritual Nature with all that is godly, and the Will with all freedom and activity in connection with every operation of the Mind. Just as the least possible spark may kindle the greatest material fire, or the least ray of light may convince us of some source greater than itself, from which it must have come, so the least spark of Divine Love or the least ray of Divine Light, coming from the Bible or the Holy Spirit, may be sufficient to lead the Mind into the greatest activity, and the highest possible excellence in the Divine Life.

Man is conscious of Freedom in the Will by which he can choose or reject whatever is presented to it. Whilst it is to some extent necessitated by its conditions, still it is the

governing principle in the Mind, and the spring of all its action. The Will has not the power to act without knowledge, or motive, or desire, any more than the eye can see without the light; but it is only the occasion, not the cause, of action. Both motive and desire, like knowledge, are essential conditions; but freedom consists in the power which we possess of modifying our motives and desires by the exercise of the Intelligence, and either elevating or depressing the moral plane of our voluntary activity. The strongest motive or desire is but an emotion *within* the Mind, and to suppose that it could necessitate any action would be to imagine that an *emotion in* the Mind could be greater than the Mind itself.


All that relates to the Divine Life centres in the Will, and is subject to its power. When the Will is concentrated upon an object of thought or feeling, good or evil, in proportion to its force upon the object, the object itself will be reflected by the Mind, enabling it to rise to the higher or sink to the lower motive, as it chooses. The force, however, which it exercises is exceedingly small, compared with the power which it wields. As an engine, moving a vast train, which requires immense power,

is worked by a weak hand, although the action which the hand really performs is but to employ the necessary material, and govern the springs by which it moves, that action of the engine is as much subject to the Will as if all the power centred in the hand that controlled it. Or like *the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about by a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.*

SECTION II.

HUMAN POWER IN RELATION TO GOD.

It is not unreasonable to suppose that God, to whom so many worlds were possible, should call into existence at least one capable of knowing and glorifying Him. But this necessarily requires perfect Freedom in the Will. It must be laid down as a fundamental position that the mind puts forth its volitions without being necessitated to do so. We must either admit this or lose ourselves in the labyrinth of an infinite series of causes, and bind ourselves in the chains of Fatalism. There is no intermediate position between the Libertarian and the Necessarian. They are completely



opposed. This is not a contest of outposts. No one can change from the one to the other without a complete revolution. No one can take away anything that is essential to either without removing a pillar upon which the whole fabric rests. The one holds the Conditioned, the other the Unconditioned, in human action.

But, in contending for the Freedom of the Will, there is no necessity to affirm that the Will is uncaused. It is as much the effect of God's creative power as anything that He has made, and is as much dependent upon Him as if necessitated. The Will is simply designed to be itself a cause. Mind is essentially an active principle, just as much as it is an intelligent principle, and the understanding would be useless without the Will. Each alike is dependent upon God, and, were He to withdraw His presence at any moment, they would cease to operate; but while they exist, they are a Personality, and are necessarily Self-active and Intelligent.

We can easily conceive that God can exercise power without being impelled by any antecedent cause; and it is equally conceivable that Infinite power could create beings possess-

ing a power resembling His own—only finite not infinite, dependent not independent—perfectly dependent for their original power, but perfectly free in the exercise of that power.

Much of the confusion of this subject arises from the confounding of moral causes with physical causes. “The power of a material body,” says Dr. M’Cosh, “seems to be a power to influence some other body or some other substance. It seems, also, to be a law of the action of bodies that, when any one body acts on another, that other acts on it; and, from all we know of spirit and body, they seem to be so constituted,—that is, to have such a nature imparted to them,—that they mutually help each other, and co-operate to produce a joint result. But there is a great difference in purely mental action. Every material body is inert and passive. Material causation requires the presence of two or more bodies, whereas mental causation requires the presence of only one—the self-acting mind. I can think, will, and feel, without the conscious presence of any external object.” In this sense it is not difficult to see that there may be in the Will the most perfect causation, at the same time the most perfect freedom.

This principle governs man in all that relates to the formation of his character, and in all that contributes to the realization of the Divine Life. The Will, no doubt, is influenced by all the previous actions of the life; and to the consciousness of liberty, at any individual moment, we must add, also, the tendencies which arise from all the experience of the past life. There is a constant absorption of nature into character; thus becoming an accumulated force in the conditions of the exercise of the Will, and powerfully affecting all the phenomena of the mind. But, whilst all that influences man for good must come from God, we cannot analyse any act of consciousness without being convinced that the Will has been only *influenced*, that it has never been *necessitated*. Whether God influences us by His Providence, His Word, or the immediate operations of His Spirit, there is precisely the same freedom as if the Will were independent of all conditions, and subject to no power beyond itself.

Thus in the mind the effect of causation is altogether different from that in matter. In matter, the more complete the causation, the more perfectly will be seen the laws of necessity; in mind, the more powerfully it is affected,

according to its laws, the more complete will be its sense of freedom ; because, whilst the nature of physical causation is to perfect the laws of Necessity, the nature of mental causation is to perfect the laws of Freedom.

We must possess natural power, or we cannot be responsible for its exercise. A power dependent upon any other being, whilst that being controls it, cannot be obligatory. To deny the possibility of a power being derived from God to perfect a moral agent, is to deny the Divine power altogether, and to force us to conclude that there are conceptions in the finite mind which can find no realization in the great scheme of Redemption.

All moral good must be dependent upon moral freedom. Every virtuous action must be voluntary. A necessitated virtue would involve a necessitated volition, which is a contradiction and an absurdity. Whatever may be the surroundings of the Will or the forces which influence it—whether they be Human or Divine—the sense of obligation must always be limited to our conscious ability. The strongest possible proof of human power is the fact that God, who is our infinitely benevolent Father, has required its exercise. He could not demand that which

we had not power to render Him. To deny this would be to imagine that a requirement would be right in God which would be impossible in itself. WHAT WE CANNOT DO WE OUGHT NOT TO BE REQUIRED TO DO. But if we admit the foregoing conclusions, we see all the laws of moral government at work, so suited to man's moral nature that, whilst *all power belongeth unto God*, it is only the power bestowed upon man that is necessary for the perfection of his moral nature. Thus we become conscious of an All-controlling power, moving us to think, to feel, and to act, at the same time that we ourselves are an all-controlling power in all that relates to our mental and moral perfection. Certain it is that God holds us as responsible for the exercise of that power as if it were exclusively our own. Whilst *in Him we live, and move, and have our being*, it is the living and moving of a Free Being.


SECTION III.

HUMAN POWER IN CONNECTION WITH HUMAN DEPRAVITY.

In our consideration of Human Power we must view it in connection with Sin. We can

no more understand the mind by contemplating its original power, than we can the body by studying the laws of some healthful constitution when it is afflicted with some fatal disease. Man must be seen amidst the ruins of the Fall. *I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law which is in my members.* And all the requirements of God are binding upon man in this fallen state; not upon angels, nor upon man in paradise, but upon man amidst the ignorance, weakness, and corruption of a Depraved Nature. We cannot conceive, when we understand God's Law, how He could have required less than obedience to it from a moral agent, or that any system of moral government could be more perfectly adapted to the weakness of human nature, without failing to purify and elevate it, than God's Revealed Law. There is but one Law governing heaven and earth, but one principle that can influence moral beings. The Law which governs angels and the spirits of just men made perfect is simply a higher manifestation of that which is em-

bodied in God's Written Word. He does not create the principles of moral government : they emanate from His moral nature. The laws of the material universe are in themselves infinitely good, but they are not in themselves necessary. Moral good and moral evil cannot change. The laws of Nature are dependent upon the Will that produced them ; but the laws of the spiritual universe do not depend upon even the Highest Will. They are right in themselves. In perfect harmony with the Divine Will, they still are independent of it ; and as they are not created, so they cannot be annulled. God can only change by annihilating. Sin is death ; holiness is life. Sin in the soul is like poison in the body. The moment poison enters the body it begins to destroy all the vitalities of human nature, and the moment that sin enters the soul it destroys in it all that is godly. So that man requires a law suited to the death of sin. He requires a scheme by which he can be justified from all his past sin. There can be no peace whilst there is guilt. There can be no holy action in a mind disturbed by the sense of unforgiven sin. Man needs pardon. But he needs more than justification for the sins of the past. He is still



without a holy character. He needs also Regeneration, which alone can bring him into affinity with a holy God.

It is more than probable, amidst the defilement of sin, that man has sunk to the lowest possible depths of weakness and corruption ; and there can be no possible degree of moral degradation to which the great scheme of Redemption is not adapted. We can scarcely conceive of responsible beings becoming more depraved and ignorant than the lower types of humanity, without ceasing to be accountable for their actions : but, as some of the vilest have fulfilled the requirements of the Divine Law in connection with Divine Grace, it is evident that the most depraved may comply with its demands.

Thus it is clear that, whilst without Christ we can do nothing, the Gospel plan is so complete that we can do all things through Christ strengthening us ; and, whilst all our inclinations are opposed to God's Will, we may, by the operation of His Holy Spirit, in connection with His Word—without God's lowering the standard of His Law, or requiring less than obedience to it—*be justified freely from all things by the Redemption which is in Christ*

Jesus ; for Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth : and thus, by choosing Christ, we fulfil the Law.

SECTION IV.

THE APPLICATION OF HUMAN POWER TO THE DIVINE LIFE.

Two kinds of Government could have been given to man. He might become the mere creature of sense, and a system of legislation might be given to him which should pander to his inclinations and propensities, aiming only at the regulation of his lower nature, reducing him merely to instinctive life, and extinguishing every spark of moral agency. Or man might have been placed under a system of Government which, while descending to his weakness and corruption, and requiring nothing with which it cannot enable the feeblest and vilest to comply, proposes to strengthen all that is weak, and to destroy all that is unholy, in human nature, without the annihilation of any element that is essential to that nature ; and to renew all the faculties of the mind in righteousness, without in any way superseding those faculties. The latter is the plan chosen


by Infinite Wisdom in the Mediatorial Sovereignty of Jesus Christ; and it is self-evident that this is best. In it we are dependent upon the Grace of God, just as much as we are dependent upon the outward world for the exercise of our senses; but the adaptation is not more complete in the natural than in the spiritual world.

The spring of the Divine Life is the Love of God in Christ Jesus, as manifested in the Atonement, which is wrought out in us by the Holy Spirit. Its every element flows from the throne of Grace; but the Spirit of Grace never contravenes our natural freedom nor changes the operation of our natural faculties. He only quickens into life our inanimate powers, and supplies what is necessary for the perfect exercise of those powers. We require nothing new, to embrace all the principles of the New Life. We want no new nature; but the old nature regenerated and sanctified is sufficient to reflect again the perfect image of God.


There is an indestructible principle in our spiritual nature which has continued to exist amidst the death of the Fall—a power which is still capable of being quickened into life amidst the most deadly diseases of sin. Man has no

actual power of his own, apart from the power of Redemption; but he has power enough, when the cup of salvation is offered, to lift it to his lips and drink. He has no actual light, but the Spirit sufficiently *enlightens every man that cometh into the world* to enable him to come to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Without this principle, the Divine Life would be an original creation, causing man to lose all identity with his former self. The real identity of human nature being its moral identity, the effect of this would be not to restore man but to annihilate him, and to bring into existence new beings.

The constitution of our nature is such that, whilst the Will is free, the Intellect and the Sensibility are to such a degree necessitated that they can be acted upon without in any way affecting our ultimate freedom. They are involuntary states of the mind, and have no more power to resist the influences that move them than the body has to resist the atmospheric changes which affect it. The mind, like the body, is strongly influenced by all the elements with which it comes in contact; but it is not subject to them. It requires a proper state of the Intelligence and the Sensibility, just



as the body requires clearness and warmth in the atmosphere. The more perfect these are, in both cases, the more complete will be the state of the action. The motives, the intelligence, the desires and inclinations, are the forces used by the Spirit in the Divine Life ; but the mind in its united action is greater than any particular motives or desires that may be combined against it. Thought and volition seem to require emotion as a condition of their action. Every part of our nature seems to appeal to every other part for permission to act, and seems to receive admonitions when it acts wrongly. Thus, if the body violates its laws, it is warned by pain, and if it continue to transgress, unless its sensibilities have become dead, the pain will increase. Conscience stands in a similar relation to Sensibility. Wherever there is moral wrong,—unless the Conscience be seared by repeated offences,—in proportion to the enormity of the offence, will it be burdened with a sense of guilt. But no sense of guilt can control the Will. The Will may obey the laws of right or wrong. As many a patient, whilst the remedies have been accessible, has allowed the most fatal diseases to gain strength, until there has been no hope, so the greatest moral delinquencies



have been seen under circumstances the most favourable to virtue. Man is placed in a world of good and evil, of light and darkness, right and wrong, and these antagonistic forces are constantly at work within him; but, by virtue of his freedom, not a single element can pass into his character without the consent or choice of the Will.

The relation between emotion and volition is analogous to that which exists between our perception of premises and our inferring from them a logical conclusion. We cannot resist the conclusion whilst we are convinced of the truth of the premises; but we can easily reconsider the data of our reasoning, or the motive which actuates it, or its relation to other data, or other motives. All we require, in order to come to right conclusions, and to choose the highest ends, is to be furnished with right premises and to be willing to act from the highest motive. If our *eye be single, our whole body will be full of light*; whilst, if our *eye be evil, our whole body will be full of darkness*. It is the motive from *within* the mind rather than the motive from without it that determines the action. The motives from without are to most men pretty much the same—just

as the elements in plants are alike : but, as it is the germ which forms every element into itself, so, if the governing motive in the mind be sincerity and the love of truth, however much it may interfere with our preconceived notions, or prejudices, or whatever may be its objective relations, as certainly as the seed develops its own inherent qualities, so certainly will the mind expand according to its ruling motives. On the other hand, if the governing motive be insincerity, pride, or selfishness—where the deeds are evil, and men love darkness rather than light—the most powerful motives from without will fail to affect the character for good. It is the choosing of the truth, with all its consequences and sacrifices, which constitutes the germ of all that is true in character, and which must in the long-run subdue all things to itself. The first act of all that is holy is the simple choice of all that is true. All the investigations of truth will fail until this becomes the governing principle. And, whilst it is the privilege of but few to be actuated by the highest motives from without—very few having large intelligence or being placed in circumstances which can excite the highest aims—yet all alike can be sincere. All alike can choose the true as far

as they know it, and this will enable all in their measure to resemble Him who is the Truth.

This principle is seen throughout the progressive Christian Life. Neither the Intellect, nor the Sensibility, nor the Will, can create a single element of the Divine Life. The exercises of the several faculties must necessarily be confined to their spiritual intuitions, awakened by the Holy Spirit in connection with Divine Truth. The first consciousness of these is seen in Conversion. In the renewal of the spirit of the mind, the Holy Spirit gives to man spiritual experience, which forms the root of the New Life, and the data of new conclusions, purposes, plans, aspirations, and hopes; and these again, as they expand, form new data for still higher intuitions, still forming the governing principle of the mind: as the Logical Understanding and the Sensibility stretch out to all truth, and beauty, and goodness, finding their ultimatum in *loving God with all the heart, and mind, and soul, and strength*. Such will be the natural consequence in the case of every sincere seeker of Divine Truth.

The immortal works of the great minds of the past prove that man possesses immense natural power. It cannot be denied that some of the

greatest productions of human genius have come from men who have had no knowledge of Written Revelation, and who have sunk, amid all their intellectual greatness, to the lowest possible degradation. This proves that there is no necessary connection between Genius and *Virtue*, much less between Knowledge and the *Divine Life*. Knowledge is not life; it is only one of its *conditions*, and supposes its existence. It cannot extend beyond the analysis of its properties and relations. We can only know that of which we are conscious. All the efforts of the natural mind have failed in the degree in which it has failed to grasp, as the first essential of the Divine Life, supernatural power. The Stoic could quench the fires of passion, but he could not produce in their place one single spark of New Life. Hence, all schools of philosophy could reach no farther than that light which serves merely to make the darkness visible.

To enable man to rise to the Divine Life, he wants something above himself. He has power to obey, rather than to command; to choose the good, rather than to produce it; to fulfil the conditions of power, rather than actually to originate power. All *power belongeth unto God*, and all spiritual power is found in the

Gospel alone, which is *the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*. The natural man obeys laws which are not the laws of life, but of death ; he has powers of devotion, but they are applied to wrong objects ; he has strong affections, but they are not *set upon things above*, and everything they embrace tends only to corruption. But, turning to Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, those who have suffered most from the Fall are not too deaf to hear the Spirit's voice, nor too dead to feel His quickening power. There is still *a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding*. Stung by the fiery serpent, his expiring soul has power enough, when the Son of God is lifted up within the range of the spiritual vision, to look to Him until He becomes *the Author and Finisher of his faith*.

To deny the possibility of man's power to comply with the conditions of the Divine Life would undermine all the principles of Moral Government, and reduce man's Salvation to a scheme of Necessity. On the other hand, to suppose that man has power to save himself without Divine Grace, is to suppose that he could *bring a clean thing out of an unclean*, and

to seek the living among the dead ; but, when we properly define both the Human and the Divine power, we are enabled to

. . . "Assert eternal providence,
And justify the ways of God to men."

We perceive a system of Government every way in harmony with our mental and moral constitution, with the history of human nature in every age of the world, and with the teachings of Divine and of necessary truth. God is seen, not only to be just whilst He justifies, but just while He punishes, the ungodly. We behold also our strength in the Divine Grace, and our weakness without it. We can, moreover, account for the failure of the greatest minds of the past when destitute of Divine instruction, and see the reason why wayfaring men, though fools, have not erred when they have possessed this instruction. Thus, in virtue of Redemption, we are responsible for the exercise of a power which we already possess as the foundation of all moral obligation—*a power which is sufficient to enable us to fulfil every condition upon which rests the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Peace.*

The great lesson, then, for every man to

learn is, how to obey God, and how to fulfil the requirements of the Divine Life. All that man's weakness and ignorance require is found in the perfect work of Christ. *It hath pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell*; and the Bible everywhere teaches that the reason why we do not realize this blessing is our unwillingness to fulfil the conditions necessary in a Moral Agent, and without which God cannot act in accordance with man's moral nature. It is not a question of what we can do WITHOUT the Grace of God, but what we can do WITH the Grace of God underlying all our moral consciousness; not what is natural to man without supernatural power, but what is natural to him when in contact with the operations of Divine Truth, and the immediate action of the Divine Spirit, forming around the spirit of man a spiritual world, as real to his spiritual nature as the world of sense to his material nature.

It will be observed that all the doctrines in connection with the Divine Life are intended to call forth the Active Powers of the Mind. Repentance, Faith, Conversion, Sanctification, Perfection, Preaching, Prayer, and Providence, all alike are adapted to bring into action the faculties of our Voluntary Nature.

We do not seek to be wise above what is plainly written in God's Word, or what is a clear deduction from Necessary Truth. But whilst there is much in this subject which we cannot understand, if we will study truth rather than systems, all that is of practical value may be easily comprehended. Where God has spoken, we will speak ; where He is silent, we will be silent.



“Religion tells of amity sublime,
Which no condition can preclude ; of One
Who sees all sufferings, comprehends all wants,
All weakness fathoms, can supply all needs.
But is that bounty absolute? His gifts,
Are they not still, in some degree, rewards
For acts of service? Can His love extend
To hearts that own not Him? Will showers of grace,
When in the sky no promise can be seen,
Fall to refresh a parched and withered land?
Or shall the groaning spirit cast her load
At the Redeemer's feet?”—*Wordsworth*.

“The gift which from our Maker's bounty flows,
Most precious, most resembling His own good,
Is liberty of will, a gift bestowed
On creatures who possess intelligence,
For they, and only they, are so endowed.”—*Dante*.

“How would it look to you if there were any powerful king, and he held not free men in all his kingdom, but that all were slaves?’ Then said I, ‘It would not be thought by me right nor reasonable if men in a servile condition only should attend upon him.’ Then quoth he, ‘It would be more unnatural if God, in all His kingdom, had no free creatures under His power. Therefore he made two rational creatures, free angels and men, and gave them the great gift of freedom. Hence they could do evil as well as good, whichever they would. He gave this very free gift, and a very fixed law, to every man unto this end.’”—*King Alfred.*

“There are two alternatives to the man who thinks to have his spirit calmed. The first is to possess, or think that he possesses, the truth on the question which interests humanity ; and the second is to know clearly that the truth is inaccessible, and to know why it is so. We never see humanity rebelling against the barriers which limit its power on all hands.”—*Jouffroy.*

CHAPTER II.

HUMAN POWER IN REPENTANCE.

“I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.”—*Psalm* cxix. 59.

“When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth. He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”—*John* xvi. 13 and 8.

“Him hath God exalted with His right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”—*Acts* v. 31.

“Now God commandeth all men everywhere to repent.”—*Acts* xvii. 30.


“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”—*Phil.* ii. 12, 13.

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”—*2 Peter* iii. 9.

IN all our considerations of the Divine Life, we should begin where the Divine Teacher Himself began. He is our perfect example in all things. *He knew what was in man, and Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

It is instructive to us to know that Christ, at the commencement of His ministry, regarded nothing of so much importance as Repentance. *In Him were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, and He could easily have answered all the speculative questions that had perplexed humanity ; but He has taught us, by the order of His own teaching, that man requires, as the most essential preliminary to all other study, to understand the true nature of Repentance.

The Great Teacher, in His plan of instruction, was not indifferent to the natural laws of the human mind. Repentance is a first principle of the doctrine of Human Nature, as well as a first principle of the doctrine of Christ. Lord Herbert, a leading British deist, gave great prominence to Repentance, as one of the fundamental principles in the truths which Natural Religion teaches ; and it requires but very little acquaintance with the human mind to know that the state which Repentance represents is the only transition from sin to holiness. Every other question will be of but little importance to man, until he practically understands his true relation to God. There is no susceptibility in the mind for the reception of the Divine nature



apart from the state which Repentance produces.

SECTION I.

REPENTANCE AS A PRINCIPLE OF DIVINE TRUTH.

The original word [μετάνοια], as used in the New Testament, signifies after-thought, after-consideration, after-wisdom, or such an application of the powers of the mind to our relation to God, as shall produce a change of purpose from a wrong to a right course. The word signifies, not only a turning from sin, but a turning to God, according to His will. The New Testament doctrine of Repentance corresponds with expressions in the Old Testament Scriptures, such as these : *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom ; and to depart from evil is understanding. I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.* Repentance is really the state of mind in which we begin to think wisely in relation to God and the claims of His government. Wisdom is the right application of knowledge ; and *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* Whatever may be the extent of a man's knowledge, he can scarcely be said to be wise, until he has applied

his knowledge to the working out of his own salvation. The consecration of the powers of the mind to God must ever be the noblest exercise of which we are capable ; and the only entrance into the service of God is through the strait gate of Repentance. Therefore, as self-knowledge is the beginning of all knowledge, so Repentance is the beginning of all wisdom ; and the chief distinction in the wisdom which produces Repentance is that it relates to man as a sinner with the consciousness that he can only be saved through Christ his Saviour.


A chief element in Repentance is sorrow for sin : and, in a certain sense, this is its true idea. But there is much in this view, as generally understood, which confuses the mind of the penitent. Sorrow is an involuntary state of the mind, and all the appeals of God's Word are to our voluntary nature. Many sincere inquirers after Christ are perplexed, because they cannot, by an immediate volition of the mind, produce *a broken and contrite heart*. Of course, this is impossible. They cannot feel pain of mind, any more than pain of body, by any direct exercise of the Will. Sorrow is an *effect*, not a cause. It is the evidence of Repentance, and the proof that the mind has passed from the outer regions

of thought to a sense of sin and holiness. Contrition is the result of the mind viewing itself in the light of God and eternity. Sorrow for sin is necessarily implied in Repentance ; but too often we expect the effect without the operation of the proper cause. It is thinking wisely that will produce the *godly sorrow which worketh Repentance unto life, not to be repented of*. If, when we think of our ways, the natural effect is not conviction of sin, sorrow for sin, and turning from sin, then the thinking must be imperfect. In this sense, of thinking on the past, the original word occurs fifty-eight times in the New Testament, and is used twenty-six times by our Lord Himself.

There is another word [μεταμέλομαι], used five times in the New Testament, which means to be concerned for one's self, or to feel remorse,¹ but it is never employed in reference to man's salvation. It represents, for example, Judas, who *repented, and went out and hanged himself*; but this is a state of mind altogether opposed to that contrition by which man turns to God, that *broken and contrite heart which God will not despise*. There may be deep conviction of sin

¹ Matt. xxi. 29, 32 ; xxviii. 3 ; 2 Cor. vii. 8 ; Heb. vii. 21.

without turning to God, there may be strong remorse without any real contrition for sin. There may be merely a passion, consisting of sorrow and anger on account of the consequences of some voluntary action or course of conduct. There may be the mortification of disappointed ambition, or the memory of some wasted good, or the suffering from the violation of some law of nature, resulting only in *the sorrow which worketh death*, and not the *Repentance which is unto life*,—a change which is purely selfish, one of the bitter fruits of sin, which is usually bitterest when there is no genuine turning of the heart from sin to holiness; not that real, spiritual change, arising from a sense of supreme reverence, fear, and homage to God, in obedience to His holy law. From the correlation which exists between the Intelligence, the Sensibility, and the Will, conviction of sin and sorrow for sin are of necessity implied in Repentance; but their primary cause must ever be earnest, sincere, and appropriate thought. Thus the mind in its activity has power to turn upon itself and God; and, just as the eye, when in a perfect state, falling upon a landscape, cannot exclude the image presented to it, nor the effect which it naturally produces,



so, when it is exercised upon itself in relation to Divine Truth, there will be corresponding perception, comparison, and the association of ideas; and, unless the soul guiltily resists, the cry must be extorted, *God, be merciful to me a sinner.*

SECTION II.

DIVINE POWER IN REPENTANCE.


We have considered Repentance as a principle of Divine Truth in the human mind, operating in connection with its several faculties, and requiring, like any other exercise, the complete action of the Intellect, the Sensibility, and the Will. We have seen, that, whilst Repentance is a first principle of the Christian Life, it is also the first exercise of the mind in its transition from darkness to light, from sin to holiness. At the same time, it can be easily seen, from the depraved state of human nature, and from the design of Repentance in relation to God, that it is only by a power greater than his own that man can change *the carnal mind, which is enmity against God*, and bring it into subjection to the Law of God. It is only as the elements of Repentance are presented to the mind that it

can possibly realize its power. There is one law that applies to History, Art, Science, Philosophy, and Religion. If we study Art, it does not necessarily teach us Science; if we study Science, it does not necessarily teach us Ethics; or, if we study Ethics, we do not necessarily acquire the principles of Religion. "EVERYTHING IS ITSELF AND NOTHING ELSE." The one may influence the other, but may exist independently of the other.

In every study we form our minds from the elements which surround them; and the elements of evangelical Repentance are found alone in Christ and His salvation, as revealed in His Word. The only way to Repentance is through Christ the Way; the only truth that will produce Repentance, is Christ the Truth; the only life that will quicken Repentance, is Christ the Life. Had He not been *exalted at God's right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance*, man could never repent.


We are willing to admit all that can be said in favour of the heathen world—that they are *a law unto themselves—that their Conscience*, through the immediate operation of the Spirit of Christ, may *bear witness* to the Truth of Christ; and it cannot be denied that some of

the most eminent saints, such as Job, Abraham, and Melchizedec, had no written revelation, nor distinct knowledge of Christ ; but, if our Repentance depends upon the knowledge of ourselves as sinners in relation to God, and if men have so lamentably failed in the light of Divine Truth, the chances of Repentance must be small indeed, apart from that Truth, and there seems but little hope in merely following the light of Nature. But in the Redemption of Christ, all the elements of Repentance are provided as completely as the light, the showers, and the rain, are adapted to the seed ; and although, whilst operating separately, they are powerless, when combined in connection with a living germ, they become life, beauty, and fruitfulness. The same law applies to Repentance. Redemption is powerless apart from the Mind, the Mind is powerless apart from Redemption ; but, when brought into immediate contact, there will be produced the germ, the blossom, and the fruit of Repentance. Hence, to possess the Gospel, and to understand it, is one of the essential conditions of Repentance ;—the light of the Gospel being the only light by which we can see ourselves as sinners in relation to Christ our Saviour. Repentance is the awakening of the



Conscience to a sense of sin and holiness ; and it would be just as unreasonable to affirm that the mind did not require any objective truth, as that it could evolve the necessary elements of Repentance from its own subjective consciousness.

We believe it to be generally admitted now, that the Conscience is just as much influenced by culture and habit as is any other power of the mind. Conscience must be connected either with the Intellect or the Sensibility, or both, because it seems impossible to suppose a third classification, apart from the Will. Conscience must be either a Moral Judgment, a Moral Sense, or both. Still further, it must be connected either with our Intuitional or our Logical Consciousness, or with both the one and the other. A third form of thought is inconceivable. If then Conscience be an aggregation of the several faculties, why not suppose that all the fundamental laws of the mind are applicable to its exercise? We think that those who have written on this subject have been right in their affirmations, and wrong in their denials. There can be no reason to deny that Conscience is a Moral Judgment because we affirm it to be a Moral Sense, nor to deny to it an Intuitional power because it may be capable of Logical ex-




ercise, in relation to ethical truth. Conscience seems to depend upon the Consciousness of Personality. Each individual is an I ; and we cannot be conscious of Personality without, in an equal degree, being conscious of Obligation : we cannot feel I AM, without, at the same time, feeling I OUGHT. Conscience seems to be the sense of right and wrong in relation to all moral truth, and of ought or ought not in all moral action ; and this principle is applicable to all truth, whether it relates to God or man, time or eternity.

Taking this view of Conscience, it is easy to consider it as a Spiritual Principle, and to apply it to the light of Divine Truth. The Conscience, like any other power of the mind, cannot rise above itself without the aid of some power greater than itself : as the eye, however perfect, will depend upon the light for its proper exercise. It can only discover Divine Truth as it is presented, and only feel guilt as it sees sin. But when Divine Truth is presented to the Conscience, in a healthful state, it is as natural for it to have a just sense of good and evil, a judgment of right and wrong, as for the eye to distinguish between the various colours, or the light from the darkness.

May not this principle of our nature be identical with that which is supposed to exist in man universally, co-ordinately with Conscience itself, and designated the Religious Sense, or the Religious Sentiment; or, to use the language of Scripture, which speaks of *body, soul, and spirit*, may not this be the SPIRIT *in man*, to which the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding? We cannot conceive of any new faculty being added in the communication of the Divine Life; but we can easily conceive of Conscience as not merely sensible of ethical truth, but as also having a sense of *God, who is a spirit*, and of His truth, which is the manifestation of His spiritual nature. May not this be the life of God which was lost in the Fall, and which is restored in the regeneration of the Christian Life?

That man is capable of the attainment of the image of God no one can deny who admits the possibility of degrees in mental capacity, or who believes that man has fallen from that state. If the mind is capable of thought as well as sensation, and if it be capable of an ethical sense and an ethical judgment, why not be equally conscious of Divine Truth and of the indwelling Spirit of God? Is there anything impossible in




- the spiritual more than in the natural life? It is only the same faculties under the influence of higher truths. It must never be forgotten that every relationship of the mind is the relation of the Intellect and the Sensibility to objects of which it is conscious, and that two things are always necessary to its exercise: it must have an object, and it must operate upon the object; and the image will be reflected perfectly or imperfectly, according to the perfection of the mirror of the mind. When the mind yields to the objects of sense, it sinks to the animal, and is under the dominion of the body; when it rises to thought and reason, and the sensibility of right and wrong, it is subject to the government of the soul; and when it is brought into immediate contact with God in Christ, and with His holy Word, it is under the reign of spirit, the whole nature becoming spiritual; and, whilst there is still the struggle with the lower nature, the spiritual life is the governing principle in the mind, constituting its higher or lower form, according to its strength.

We are now in a position to see clearly the mode of the Divine operation upon the impenitent mind. The great object of the Divine power is to bring us immediately into contact

with the Divine Attributes; and the Spiritual Life must necessarily be limited by the possession of spiritual truth. The various forms of the Divine Life are but the mind in its various relations to Divine Truth and the Divine Spirit. In Repentance the Conscience is awakened to a sense of sin; in justification, to a sense of pardon; in regeneration, to a sense of renewal in the spirit of the mind; in sanctification, to a sense of entire holiness; and in perfection, the consciousness of expansion into all the life of God: and just as it is the state of the Conscience in the natural life which constitutes its virtue, so it is the state of the Conscience in the Spiritual Life which constitutes its Holiness.

Nothing can be more perfectly adapted to call into exercise the principles of the Spiritual Life than the great scheme of Redemption. God's plan of instructing man seems to be from the lower to the higher forms of thought. The nearer the instruction can accommodate itself to the sense or to the simpler acts of the intelligence, the more likely it is to succeed. It is so difficult for the heathen to know God because it is so hard to impress the mind, except through the senses. It must begin with the concrete, and rise, by slow degrees, to abstract truth.



Christ, as revealed in His Gospel, is the nearest possible approach to this. He is, to the weakest mind, the simplest possible concrete truth, and He is also to the strongest mind the greatest possible abstraction. There is, in the light of the Gospel, which is the reflection of Christ himself, enough to bring into the clearest possible view the *exceeding sinfulness of sin*, and the exceeding greatness of His salvation, enough to make the sinner exclaim, *Behold I am vile ! I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes !* and, at the same time, enough to lead to Him *whose blood cleanseth from all sin.*


The Gospel is just what the sinner needs in his enmity against God. It comes to him as a *conciliation* amidst his hatred and rebellion. It is the good news which offers love for his enmity, pardon for his guilt, purity for his sinfulness, and life for his death. When it begins to speak, it proclaims *peace and good will towards men*; when it begins to act, it shows Him *who was in the form of God, humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross ; saving to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.*

There is nothing that will tend so much to soften an enemy as to make some great sacri-

fice for him. Let the man whom he has injured show him some great kindness, by overcoming evil with good, and he would scarcely be human, if every noble feeling left in his nature were not aroused, if he did not soften into contrition, and seek forgiveness. And what sacrifice can equal the sacrifice of Christ? or what gift can be compared to the gift of God's *only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life?* All the operations of Divine Love, all the glories of Divine Holiness, all the mysteries of Divine Wisdom, all the charms of Divine Benevolence, all the wonders of Divine Grace, centre in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ!

"Love so amazing, so Divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

The primary design of the life and death of Christ was to *magnify the law and make it honourable*; but, almost in a co-ordinate degree, it was intended to supply man with motives by which he may come to God, Redemption would have been in vain without the Gospel, just as this world would have been in vain without its luminous atmosphere. Whilst man is not necessitated to act by his motives, he cannot



act without them; and the only motives that have proved sufficient to draw men to God are those supplied by the great facts of Redemption. Even *the terrors of the Lord* are but the voice of God raised to louder tones in *warning man to flee from the wrath to come*. He unveils to him the regions of eternal darkness, that he may flee to the light; He brings him within the sound of the wailing of the lost, that he may run to Christ for Salvation; He shows him the *abounding sin*, that he may seek the *abounding Grace*.

What man wanted was to be brought into intelligent intercourse with the Divine Spirit, and then every condition of the Divine Life must follow. One great end of Christ's coming into the world was to render possible the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit must be to us a mere abstraction, without the great concrete facts of Redemption, to which He testifies; and these facts, so far as we can judge, are not adapted to form a spiritual character without Christ's departure, and would be in vain without the promised Comforter. Christ said to His disciples, *It is expedient for you that I go away, that the Comforter may come. And, when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, of righteous-*

ness, and judgment.¹ The Gospel becomes *the power of God unto salvation* only as it brings us into immediate contact with Him who is the power of the Gospel. *The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.* The Holy Spirit is given to carry on the work of Christ in the world. Christ has become our Advocate in heaven, and the Holy Spirit our Advocate [παράκλητος] on earth. Christ has given us His Gospel, to lead us to the living Spirit, who awakens within us the consciousness of sin and holiness. The Spirit works by precisely the same means as every true human advocate. He does not supersede human faculties, but like the advocate, at the bar, in the senate, or in the pulpit, He *CONVINCES of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.* The Conscience has no power to originate a single element of the Divine Life; it is simply a safe guide in the search of Divine Truth, where it is truly sincere, because *to every sincere Conscience the Spirit immediately reveals Himself.* Wherever the *eye is single* there is light enough to lead to the παράκλητος, who is always in the act of convincing of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. The moment

¹ John xvi. 7-15.

the Conscience is penetrated by the light of the Holy Spirit, it feels like Isaiah when he exclaimed, *Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips.* And the natural prayer of such a man will be, *God, be merciful to me a sinner;* and the natural result of such a prayer will be, *to go down to his house justified.*


SECTION III.

HUMAN POWER IN REPENTANCE.

We have seen that Repentance is the work of the Divine Spirit in connection with the Gospel of Christ; and now the question presses upon us, since Repentance is the work of the Holy Spirit, why does He not produce it in all men alike? God is *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance.* He cannot falsify Himself. If it, then, rest entirely with Himself, is He unable or unwilling to grant to all men this great gift? He cannot be unable if He is Divine, and He cannot be unwilling if He is Infinite Love. The reason is simple: Man being a Moral Agent, God cannot necessitate him, but must govern him according to the principles of Moral

Law. Repentance is the gift of Christ ; but He only influences, He does not compel. Probably, before the Fall, the Spiritual Life was natural and spontaneous ; but sin has so extinguished the light of the spiritual eye, and paralysed the powers of the soul, that only the Divine Spirit can call it into proper exercise. This He does so completely to every man that cometh into the world, in virtue of Redemption, that each may become a co-worker with God.

We only preach a part of the Gospel when we speak of the Divine power without the Human. The only manifestation of Divine power is in connection with human faculties. Whilst God leaves man free, He so influences him that he can rise to a character infinitely transcending his own depraved nature. If man could repent without the Divine Spirit, his Repentance could not be Divine ; and, if the Spirit could produce Repentance without man's co-operation, it could not be human ; but upon God's plan it is perfectly human and perfectly Divine—so perfect that it could not be more Divine if man were completely passive in it, nor more human if the Spirit exercised no power in it. A necessitated Repentance could not be the act of man, but of the power that produced



it. Hence no man has any right to expect that he will repent without putting forth his own natural power. Neither can it form any part of the righteous government of God, nor of human obligation, if man has not power to repent. What fault can there be in man for not repenting, if he *cannot* repent? The Holy Spirit must be responsible for the world's impenitence: for it is a recognised law that we are responsible for all the evil which we might remove, and for all the good which we might accomplish; and, unless there is something as real in human as in Divine power, the reason of the world's miseries must be the unwillingness of the Spirit to remove them. The Scriptures teach us that, unless man *works out his own salvation*, it will never be worked out. They appeal to the great fact that *God is working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure*, as sufficient reason for urging man to *work out his own salvation*. No language can be plainer in the Bible than that which teaches man's responsibility, and that God can do no more than He has done without infringing upon the fundamental principles of Moral Government, and destroying all that is distinctive in Moral Agency. Whatever Scripture may seem to favour an opposite view,

must be misunderstood, and must be a palpable contradiction.

The questions now arise, Where does the limit of Divine power end, and where does human obligation begin? What is the first step that a man has to take in the path which leadeth unto life? What is the first active exercise of the mind in fulfilling the conditions of Repentance? No questions can be of greater importance than these. It is evident, from the foregoing conclusions, that man has not repented, because he has not exercised a power which is possible to him. It seems to be a principle of human responsibility that it behoves man to apply the same powers to God and holiness as he applies to self and sin; and Repentance requires no other. THE DIVINE LIFE IS NOTHING MORE THAN DEVELOPED SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

The beginning of Repentance is thought on self and sin in relation to God and holiness:—*I thought on my ways, and turned my feet to Thy testimonies.* We consider that we are in a fair way in the performance of any difficult task when we begin to think about it. All virtuous actions must be intelligent. All the Intuitions of the mind require thought to bring

them into distinctness. The effects of the Holy Spirit are not mechanical, but *dynamical*. He gives power to the mind to think and act. He surrounds it with the materials of thought, and imparts the germinant power to the Will, by which it can originate any train of thought in relation to Divine truth. This is precisely what *μετάνοια* requires. We know that the condition of all consciousness is thought. Would we accomplish anything wisely, we must think wisely; would we feel deeply, we must think deeply; would we act earnestly, we must think earnestly. Our character is our developed *consciousness*, and our developed consciousness our developed *thought*.

We have seen that the only two modes of intelligence possible to man, both in the natural and the spiritual life, are the Intuitional and the Logical. In the former we arrive at truth by a direct and immediate gazing upon it. The subject stands immediately in the presence of the object, and perceives it: hence we term the process in some instances Perception, as when we come in contact with the external world through the senses; and sometimes Intuition, as when we have a direct knowledge through the interior eye of consciousness of higher and more

spiritual realities. In the Logical mode of the intelligence, on the contrary, we arrive at truth mediately, either by some calculation, or inference, or definition, by the use of the fixed laws of thought. Now, in whichever way the truth is presented to the mind, it is capable of reaching the same result. It may be flashed by the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit, or grasped, as some great principle of Divine Revelation, intuitively by the mind, or discovered by a logical process in the examination of the evidences of the Christian religion and its applicability to human want; the effect will be practically the same. All that the mind requires is a clear consciousness of its relation to truth, and this is sufficient to awaken it to a sense of previous error. With this principle, in operation, in connection with this Divine Agent, what more can be necessary to the acquisition of all truth and the rejection of all error?

Our reasoning powers, whilst they can never transcend our ideas, can so change their relations as to transform the whole character, and give a proportionately greater elevation to our intuitional consciousness. It is to this principle that we trace the failure of Rationalism and Heathenism: each alike lacks the necessary

ideas which Revelation furnishes as the only data for the awakenment of the consciousness of the Divine Life ; each alike rises no higher than itself, and calls into exercise no active powers beyond itself.

In analysing man's passive states, we find in the mind those powers of receptivity which qualify it for the greatest possible activity towards God. All men at times are strongly moved—by powerful arguments, forcible appeals, great misfortunes, severe afflictions, heavy bereavements. The mind is often so excited as to be scarcely conscious of voluntary action. Frequently, in answer to believing prayer, or under the influence of the preaching of the Gospel, the strivings of the Spirit become almost irresistible, requiring the greatest possible effort to suppress them. Few will deny the reality of strong convictions of sin, and terrible awakenings of Conscience ; but these emotions cannot become true Repentance until they have passed into true thought and produced deep sorrow for sin.

There is great difference in the strength of emotion in different individuals, according to their temperament and education. Some have greater force of Intellect, others more intensity of Feeling, others stronger Will. Some, like

In the logical mode of thought, we arrive at truth by the application of the principle of the fixed point. The use of the fixed point is a necessary way of the mind. It is the only way of r... it may be flashed... split or gr... of the Divine Reve... by... of the ev... its applica... the practi... requires is... truth, a... a sense of... in op... Agent.

... necessary to the acquisition of the rejection of all error? Our reasoning powers, whilst they transcend our ideas, can so change as to transform the whole of a proportionately greater elevation of consciousness. That we trace the... theism: ...

Lydia, feel their *hearts gently opened*; others, like the psalmist, *roar for the disquietude of their soul*; but all that is real in the work of the Holy Spirit, in the sincere exercise of thought, may be the same. The same idiosyncrasies are manifest in Repentance towards God as we daily witness in Repentance towards man. The design of God in the Divine, as in the human life, is not to reduce all men to one particular type, but to exhibit the greatest possible variety; and in every variety of character the form which the phenomena of the Divine Life takes in passing through the Conscience, gives the distinguishing features to Repentance. The impressions of many are *like the morning cloud and the early dew, which soon pass away*. They pass away because they do not pass into the Conscience through the exercise of thought. No Divine Truth can become a subject of earnest thought, if viewed in its several relations, without producing, by the agency of the Spirit of God, a broken and contrite heart. Should there seem to be failure, it will prove no exception to the law, but simply that there has not been sufficient earnestness and sincerity to bring our individuality into harmony with the truth, and compliance with the Spirit.

But the greatest difficulty is with those who complain that they cannot feel. There are instances in which the Spirit has been so often quenched, and every influence for good so often stifled, that only the dying embers of feeling are left. They have wandered into the region and shadow of death. *Desire has failed*, and every spark of spiritual life has to be re-created. This state does not exist so much in youth as in old age. Many say they would repent, but they cannot feel. They are conscious of being sinners, but their hearts are like adamant, and nothing can soften them. Hence it is a common temptation to believe that they have committed the unpardonable sin. But they have lost only the passive states of the Sensibility, not necessarily the Active Powers of the Mind. The fires of sensibility have been quenched by the cold waters of indifference, but all that is really essential to Repentance remains. The least thought on Divine Truth is sufficient to rekindle some spark of desire, and the faintest desire is sufficient to awaken the Conscience towards God. Repentance supposes no impossibility, nor any highly excited state of the emotions, but simply what every man can do in that state in which he is found. Strong sensibility

gives strength and beauty to the character, and he who is destitute of it will lose much that is strong and beautiful in the Divine Life : but *he himself shall be saved ; yet so as by fire*. Life is not less real, though it is less intense, in the old man than in the young, in the Stoic than in the Enthusiast. It may be less exuberant and fruitful ; but there may still be *fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life*.

One thing every Moral Agent can do—he is not a Moral Agent if he cannot—he can choose the good that is within his reach ; and the weakest sincere choice may be as real, though not as effective, as the strongest. The feeblest thought is sufficient to see the desirableness of choosing Christ, and the least desire is enough to form the channel of the Spirit's operation in producing Repentance. Whatever the *sin against the Holy Ghost* may be, it cannot be committed by those who have the least desire to come to Christ ; for that desire is proof that there is immediate contact with the Almighty Spirit : and *He will not quench the smoking flax*. The cases in which desire has failed, we should think, are very rare indeed. We ourselves have not met with any instances in which the fear of having committed the sin

against the Holy Ghost has not proved to be a delusion. As long as there is power in the Will to direct the thought to any given subject, that same power can direct it to the subject of religion; and God estimates the strength of thought by the strength of *sincerity* and *resolution* in directing the thought to Himself. The feeblest mind can be sincere, and can cast its feebleness upon the strength of Christ; and, whilst there may be lacking the higher developments of the Christian Life, there may be all that is essential to its existence. The natural is, of course, always possible to man, and the natural is so perfectly adapted to the supernatural, that, whilst God places before man *life and death, blessing and cursing*, it is quite possible to *choose life and blessing*.

One of the successful devices of Satan has been to fix man's exclusive attention upon the power of God, which is necessarily the same, which can never be less than Infinite, and to divert his mind from the fact that He is already Infinite Power to us. *In Him we live, move, and have our being*: therefore, we only need to put forth the activities of our mind, to awake to the consciousness of the indwelling Spirit of God, and to realize His power.

Nothing can be more admirable than the formation of the mind for Repentance. We need not wonder at this, when we remember that the design of everything is its highest capability, and we only rise to true greatness when we rise to thought in relation to God and Eternity. Other subjects have only a secondary connection with our existence. This constitutes the essence of our well-being, both in the present and the future world. We are what we become when alone with our thoughts. *As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.* Repentance is a coming to one's-self, and applying the thoughts suggested by sermons, books, society, the events of Providence, the occurrences of daily life, to the conditions of salvation.

Thought in Repentance is what the sap is to the tree, the blood to the body, and the senses to the soul. It is the power that assimilates, that forms, and that converts the objective elements of salvation into character. Freedom would be our greatest curse without the power of thought, and thought would be powerless without freedom. Thought is the material of the Will's action ; true thought produces action, for action is only thought in motion. The mind, like the eye, can look upward to heaven

or downward to hell, inward upon itself or outward upon the world, can dwell upon sin or meditate upon holiness, descend to the creature or rise to the Creator.

“Man’s soul is his own universe.

* * * * *

Thoughts are his creatures, which run to and fro,
And bring him pleasure from all parts and things—
The light or shade of ecstasy or woe,
The wide creation of imaginings :
Things past, things present, and things yet to be,
Mirror of history and futurity.”


Every thought that we entertain influences the whole mind, leaving a residuum in the whole character, drawing us nearer to God or driving us farther from Him, making us more penitent or more impenitent.

The Gospel finds man dead in trespasses and sins. It discovers to him a living body and soul, but a dead spirit. The Will has not been dethroned, but has allowed itself to be governed by the flesh instead of the spirit, and, like Samson when shorn of his locks, it has become completely enslaved. It has taken its laws from the creature rather than the Creator, and its spring has been selfishness rather than benevolence. It has followed *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*; and the Conscience,

without the influence of Divine Truth, has not had sufficient power to check its downward tendency, until, at last, the Will has become the complete slave of the inclination.

Although the Will has power to obey the convictions and affirmations of Conscience, there is not sufficient light in the intelligence, apart from Divine Revelation, to make these convictions and affirmations strong enough to counteract the strength of human depravity. It is only in the light of the Gospel that the Conscience can assert its power; it is only as it becomes luminous with spiritual truth that it can move again around God, the centre of light and love, and bring all the operations of the mind into harmony with the Divine Will; and it is only in this relation that the Will, standing in the centre of body, soul, and spirit, can bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Thus the reason of man's impenitence is his want of thought, and he does not think because he refuses to put forth the power which God has already given him. "The world," says Pascal, "is full of fugitives from themselves: men are not happy, but simply diverted." And they are fugitives from themselves because they do not *come to themselves*. The only cure for



the world's sin and misery is the thought which will produce Repentance. Men dread to think of themselves in the light of God's Word, because it awakens Conscience, and Conscience reveals their guilt in the sight of God. Hence men will do anything in order to banish thought. They will rush into pleasure, engage in schemes of business, indulge in intoxication or the grossest vice, that they may become oblivious of themselves. Why are the various forms of sinful amusement necessary? Only because it is necessary for men to flee from themselves, and that they may drown the voice of that Conscience which is ever the voice of God distinctly speaking, as soon as the clamour of the world is hushed to silence.

Many false religions are but attempts to escape the sense of guilt which disturbs the impenitent Conscience. Rationalism and Ritualism are but extremes of restless spirits, seeking after God without the humiliation which the true contrition of the heart gives before Him. Rationalists and Ritualists are not the monsters that they are frequently represented. They are generally men of deep convictions, strong religious instincts, and great sincerity of aim. But their aim is not to conform to the simple teaching of

Christ, but Christ as He is represented by the Church, or by the Schools of Philosophy, or some ideal of their own imagination. They are prodigals coming to themselves ; but they remain feeding upon the husks which the swine do eat, instead of arising and coming to their Father.

There is a changeless law of cause and effect, of action and reaction, in the physical, mental, and spiritual world. If we, for example, approach a mountain of ice, we become cold, because we impart to it more heat than we receive from it ; and we are necessarily reduced, to a great extent, to the moral or spiritual temperature in which we choose to dwell. With the wise we become wise ; with the foolish we become foolish ; with the pure-minded we become virtuous ; with the wicked we become depraved ; with the indolent we become lazy ; and with the industrious, active. We cannot think long on any impure object without being influenced by the impurity of the object itself. *Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

“My thoughts are working like a busie flame,
Until their cockatrice they hatch and bring ;
And, when they once have perfected their draughts,
My words take fire from my inflamed thoughts.”

One look at Cæsar's dead body was enough to arouse the Romans to fury and revenge. There is the same law of association in the Divine Life. Let any man think with the utmost earnestness and sincerity that he can command on sin and salvation, and he will find that salvation is within his power; and the greatest temptations may be neutralized by changing the current of our thoughts.

There exist in the mind, not the blank soul, merely receiving impressions from without, nor original moulds giving certain forms of thought from within, but primitive cognitions, judgments, beliefs, moral convictions, spontaneous operations, by which one can understand and determine the proper character of everything, when the necessary conditions are supplied; and we possess no other power by which we can work out our own salvation. The only process by which this can be accomplished is the mind turned upon itself, and viewed in the light of the Gospel: man's sin in the light of the Atonement, his helplessness in relation to the infinite power of Christ. What is there in this impossible, even in the vilest and weakest? Who can think of himself as a rebel against Infinite Love, *despising the riches of His good-*

ness, denying the Lord that bought him, trampling on the blood of the covenant, and counting it a common and unholy thing, quenching the Holy Spirit, who is striving to draw him to heaven, rejecting the Word which He has inspired, without being convinced that impenitence is the blackest sin in the universe, and that the sin of the angels who kept not their first estate, and of Adam who broke God's first command, deserve but small punishment compared with the neglect of this great salvation ?

We cannot trace the exact point where the Divine Power ends and where the Human begins. The fact is, the Divine never ends ; we can only trace the human channels through which the Divine Power flows. Like rivers, which receive their supplies from showers descending from heaven, or from springs so deeply hidden in the earth that their origin must be for ever concealed from the human eye, although the river of water of life descends from God out of heaven, and springs from the throne of God and the Lamb it is only through the channels of human thought, which are perfectly known to consciousness, that it can flow into our hearts. *One* penitent desire will open those channels, and *one* impenitent desire

will close them. *Whosoever* WILL, *let him take of the water of life freely.* Albert Barnes, a well-known Calvinistic writer, speaking of man's alleged inability to repent, has said : " No one would dare to invent such a plea for himself ; nor could he keep himself long in countenance with such a pretence, if he were left alone. It is so obviously a reflection upon the goodness and justice of God, such a manifest violation of all his own views of right and of all the dictates of his own conscience, so plainly in the face of the Bible, that a man would be compelled to forsake it, if he had not the countenance of some of the better classes of Christians. I verily believe, indeed, that Satan never furnished to sinners a more obvious, useful, and unanswerable defence of impenitence, than has thus been furnished by the ministry of the Gospel. Tell a man that he cannot repent, or love God, or obey Him, and your work will be done. The effect of one such dogma will go through life ; will shed a baneful influence on large regions of Christian truth ; and, like the tree of Upas or the siroc of the desert, will shed a desolation all round the moral feelings of a man in regard to his duties towards God."

The Bible everywhere assumes that the im-

penitent will not seek the influences of Divine Grace, or that when given he resists them. It appeals to him in every page to put forth a power which God has already called into exercise. Many do not see *the exceeding sinfulness of sin*, for the same reason that they are blind to human obligation and to their own social delinquencies. They do not think on their ways nor choose the right. Nothing is so unreasonable as sin, if we will fairly reason upon it. Who could refuse to give God his heart, or to render to Him his homage, or consecrate himself to His service ; or who could prefer *the pleasures of sin for a season* to eternal happiness, or settle questions respecting the present life, but leave the question of his salvation doubtful, if he only seriously reflected on his ways ?

It is a blessed truth that *God commandeth all men everywhere to repent*. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. It matters not how wicked or unrighteous. *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord; and He will have mercy upon him*. He may be near the chambers of eternal death ; *hell from beneath may be mov-*

ing to meet him ; but, if he will think on his ways, and turn his feet to God's testimonies, he may find the way that leadeth to eternal life. Calvary may be seen from any point where the back is turned upon sin. Let the penitent sinner turn to the Cross of Christ. Let him *behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.* At first the hill of Calvary may be difficult, and the sight of the Saviour indistinct ; but let him continue to ascend, and continue to gaze, and One proceeding from the Father and the Son will strengthen and enlighten him, until he reaches the foot of the Cross, and can gaze upon the world's Atonement ; and then one look at the Crucified will be enough to give life ; one grasp of His Cross will send a thrill of Divine Power through the whole of his spiritual nature : his chains shall fall off ; his burden shall be thrown down ; the darkness from his spirit shall roll away ; his guilt shall be removed ; God shall smile ; and his song shall be,—

“ 'Tis done, the great transaction's done ;
I am my Lord's, and He is mine.”



“ Thy God hath said 'tis good for thee
To walk by Faith, and not by sight :
Take it on trust a little while ;
Soon shalt thou read the mystery right,
In the bright sunshine of His smile.”—*Keble*.

“ Therefore love and believe ; for works will follow spontaneous,
Even as the day does the sun : the right from the good is
an offspring,
Love in a bodily shape ; and Christ's works are no more
than
Animate Faith and Love, as flowers are the animate spring-
tide.”—*Longfellow*.

“ Faith is not Reason's labour, but repose.”—*Young*.

“ The steps of Faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The rock beneath.”—*Whittier*.

"There never was found, in any age of the world, either philosopher, or sect, or law, or discipline, which did so highly exalt the public good as Christian Faith."—*Bacon*.

"We can have no controversy, but about what is perfectly understood, as far as it is so ; and concerning the moral evidence, upon which propositions, as clear as any in the human language, are founded. Our controversies turn wholly upon what is clear. As to what is incomprehensible in any proposition, it can be no immediate, direct object, either of Knowledge or of Faith."—*John Wesley*.

"Faith is the root of all good works. A root that produces nothing is dead."—*Bishop Wilson*.

"Never yet did there exist a full Faith in the Divine Word (by Whom light as well as immortality was brought into the world), which did not expand the intellect, while it purified the heart,—which did not multiply the aims and objects of the understanding, while it fixed and simplified those of the desires and passions."—*Coleridge*.

"The abnegation of Reason is not the evidence of Faith, but the confession of despair. Reason and reverence are natural allies, though untoward circumstances may sometimes divorce them."—*Dr. J. B. Lightfoot*.

CHAPTER III.

HUMAN POWER IN FAITH.

“Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith.”—*Heb.* xii. 2.

“This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.”—*John* vi. 29.

“O ye of little faith.”—*Matt.* vi. 30.

“The apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.”—*Luke* xvii. 5.

“Great is thy faith : be it unto thee even as thou wilt.”—*Matt.* xv. 28.

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”—*Rom.* x. 17.

“By grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast.”—*Eph.* ii. 8, 9.

“Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect ?”—*James* ii. 22.

“I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”—*Gal.* ii. 20.

THERE must be something wonderful in Faith, seeing the importance attached to it in the Bible. The greatest victories there recorded were won by Faith ; the greatest men there

described were estimated according to their Faith; and the measure of the Spirit's gifts was according to the proportion of Faith. The grand purposes of God in the future are to be accomplished by Faith; and will be hastened or delayed according to the strength or weakness of His people's Faith. *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith.*

A principle so high, which contains in it the highest possible virtues, must be perfectly intelligible, and ought, in the most perfect degree, to call into exercise the Active Powers of the Mind. At the same time, a principle which must be the condition of salvation to the youngest and weakest mind, ought to be exceedingly simple.

SECTION I.

FAITH AS A CONDITION OF THE DIVINE LIFE.

Repentance is necessary to the exercise of Faith; but there is nothing in the nature of Repentance that can possibly unite the soul to Christ. It is indispensable to salvation, because we cannot embrace Christ as a Saviour until we are convinced of sin, and forsake sin. Re-

pentance consists in the sinner coming to himself; but with the first step towards Christ, and the first act of trust in Christ, he emerges from Repentance into Faith. A certain degree of Faith is implied in Repentance. *He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.* But the first awakenings of the sinful mind are a deep sense of sin; and, as it becomes conscious of Christ as the Atonement for sin, it passes into Faith—the Faith that bringeth salvation. Moreover, Repentance is necessary to the exercise of Faith, because all impenitence is sin, and sin and Faith are as much opposed as light and darkness. The heart truly sincere before God will become broken and contrite; and *a broken and contrite heart* will long for that Saviour *who healeth the broken in heart.*

The word Faith is generally considered as equivalent in signification to the word Believing. Its primary idea is grasping with the hand or holding fast, and, when applied to the action of the mind, is Trusting, Relying, Committing. The derivation of the Greek words πιστεύω and πίστις, from πείθω, to persuade, shows that *consent*, and not merely assent—an act of the Choice, and not simply a state of the

understanding, was their original meaning. A choice is essential to Faith in the scriptural sense of the term. "Faith," says Dr. McCosh, "is a native energy of the mind, quite as much as Knowledge is, or imagination is, or conception is, or feeling is." But it is a native energy of the mind in a different sense from what these are. Faith can have no essence of its own, unless it is connected with the Will. It must begin by mere assent to probable testimony, or mere cognition of existence. It must have respect to propositions, persons, facts ; but the propositions, the persons, the facts, only become objects of Faith as the mind puts forth its Voluntary Power to realize them, and they become objects of Trust. It is this which distinguishes them from mere perceptions, imaginations, or conceptions of the mind. However simple the act of Faith may be, we cannot separate this element from it. Take even those ordinary truths which are the lowest possible forms of Faith. For example, Alexander conquered Asia ; the planets move around the sun ; two straight lines cannot enclose a space. It is true that these are almost necessary Beliefs, and the Will has scarcely power to reject them, and in a certain sense they cannot

be objects of choice ; but it is also true that they are in perfect harmony with the mind's most perfect action, and become the syntheses of a series of volitions in the mind.

Faith includes the application of all the faculties of the mind—all the discoveries of Reason, all the refinements of the Sensibility, all the exercises of the Conscience—but it only becomes Faith as it calls into action the Will, and becomes an act of Choice. The point where Repentance merges into Faith is the point where conviction passes into Choice, and Choice becomes Trust. We may exercise every other energy of the mind without Faith ; but our Faith only becomes intelligent in the degree in which we apprehend the truths believed.

Faith towards God differs from faith towards man only in degree. It is the same principle, but embracing Divine Truth instead of human, God instead of man. Our Christian creeds are only our natural beliefs applied to Christian dogma. Take, for example, the so-called Apostles' Creed, which is universally received as the basis of faith among Christian sects and parties :—"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." This article of our Faith is a natural belief, arrived at

by the ordinary modes of thought. We can either receive the simple testimony of God's word, which can only be accepted by the ordinary modes of verifying evidence; we can reason *a priori*, by assuming certain principles and deducing certain consequences; or, *a posteriori*, we can ascend from design in creation to a great Designer. Faith is precisely the same in the one case as in the other: it is simply holding as true what has been presented to us on sufficient evidence, without which evidence it would be a blind faith; and without the proper exercise of the faculties it could not become evidence. Or, if we take the next article, we find the same principle: "and in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty: from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." Now, here we have a different class of evidence altogether. We have to rely almost entirely on the credibility of the historical testimony; but we reach this truth by

precisely the same laws as any other truth. Or, if we consider the next article : " I believe in the Holy Ghost." There we have a class of evidence again distinct from the former. There can be no chain of reasoning from effect to cause, neither have we any historical evidence tending to prove the existence of the Third Person in the Trinity. We must rely purely on the testimony of the Father and the Son in relation to the Holy Ghost : and their testimony is so clear that we cannot deny the personality of the Third without also denying the personality of the First and Second Person in the Trinity. In the next article we have yet another class of testimony—"the holy Catholic Church." We may consider it sufficient reason to believe in this article from the teachings of Christ and His apostles in relation to His Church, or, what is perhaps much more difficult, we may accept the signs of the holiness and catholicity of the Church, as sufficient to satisfy our Faith. In our belief in "the communion of saints" we recognise that universal brotherhood arising from our fraternal relation to Christ, and our oneness in Him our *friend that sticketh closer than a brother*; "in the forgiveness of sins," the right appreciation of the atoning work of

Christ, who is *the propitiation for our sins*; in "the resurrection of the body," the belief that He who has all power and has perfected redemption, must be the resurrection and the life; and in "the life everlasting," the consummation of that life and immortality which Christ has brought to light by the gospel. Now, in all the articles of our belief, we have simply the mind proving all things, and holding fast the truth, being the same principle applied to the various classes of evidence, and the same grasp of the various classes of truth. It is true that there may be the most perfect belief in this and in all other creeds without Saving Faith; but it is also true that Saving Faith is only the expansion of this same principle in relation to truth, until it leads us to embrace Him who is the Truth and the Life, and until the truth in us becomes a life formed according to its elements.

What, then, is that faith which constitutes the condition of the Divine Life? We think it may be easily understood by reference to the principles we have laid down in relation to the human mind.

Truth cannot influence us in connection with the Understanding alone. It is only as it passes

into the Sensibility, the Conscience, and the Will, that it can be so realised by us as to transform the mind into its nature, and quicken it into newness of life. It can easily be seen how different the choice would be in connection with the Intellect or Sensibility merely, as compared with the choice of any Truth in connection with the Conscience. It is only as the Conscience says I OUGHT or I OUGHT NOT, in reference to any particular Truth, that it can become transforming; and this is true in an infinite degree in relation to Divine Truths. Christian Faith is that exercise of the mind by which we grasp the Christian Truth, and hold it in the light of the Intellect until it is clearly understood, in connection with the Sensibility, until it is deeply felt, and, in relation to the Conscience, until the most profound sense of obligation is realised respecting it, and the guilty sinner so feels his entire sinfulness and helplessness that he must Trust alone the Person of Christ as the only hope of his salvation. The man who has a little Faith has a true Faith; but it is not sufficient to realise the great salvation of the Gospel; or it may be a mere belief in some abstract Truth rather than in the Saviour whom it was intended to reveal.

There would be no difficulty with those who profess to subscribe to Creeds or Articles, if this principle were recognised, and it were perfectly understood that we can only subscribe to any Truth in the degree in which our *WHOLE heart and mind and soul and strength* subscribe to it; for no hypocrisy can be greater than to profess to believe—especially for some advantage—in what is opposed to either our Judgment, our Conscience, or our Will. It is only as these harmonize that a Truth can really become an article of our Faith; and the true penitent, as he sees himself in the light of Divine Truth, as he feels his dependence upon Christ the Saviour of sinners, and as he casts his sins upon Christ the Atonement for sin, crying *God be merciful to me a sinner, shall go down to his house justified.*

SECTION II.

FAITH AS A SUPERNATURAL POWER.

WE have seen that what a man does or thinks in the Divine Life is human. His thoughts may carry him above himself. He may be raised by Divine Truth to God—the human to the superhuman—but still, as long as he is himself, he is necessarily human. Every thought

is a human thought, every feeling a human feeling, every act a human act. This, however, is not opposed to what we are about to assert—that Faith is a supernatural power. Faith is a supernatural power, inasmuch as that, without the gift of supernatural power, we could never exercise Faith; but the supernatural presupposes the natural power.

The Divine Life, in its several stages of progress, is throughout the expansion of the same principle. From the first awakening of Conscience in repentance, to the perfection of *the spirits of the just*, it is the renewed Conscience, expanding more and more into the light and love of God, and bringing the whole life more and more into conformity to His perfect Will. Supernatural power in Faith is this Divine Power, which produces Repentance extended to the regions of Faith; that power which shed the light of Truth around the awakened Conscience, inspiring it with hope and confidence. Christ is said to be the *Author and Finisher of our Faith*; and the apostles prayed for an *increase of Faith*, which implies that there is some immediate action of the Divine Spirit upon the mind upon which the exercise of human power depends.

It is one of the instincts of our nature, even when we have known God as He is revealed in His Word, to long for His immediate action upon the mind, without which we feel, when we have put forth our greatest efforts, that we cannot sufficiently trust in Him. The Word of God is a supernatural power, shedding its Divine light upon the darkness of the mind; and the immediate operations of the Holy Spirit are only the more direct application of the principles of Divine Truth. We require objective truth to lead us to God, and to bring us into fellowship with Him. That Word is, no doubt, sufficient to inspire us with the greatest possible confidence in God, if we perfectly understood it; but our ignorance, at best, is so great, and *the evil heart of unbelief* in us so deceitful, that the infinite wants of our spirits require the immediate operation of that Divine Spirit, which inspired that Word, to supply what is lacking in our weak, erring natures. We possess Intuitive as well as Reasoning powers, and the Spirit is pleased, whilst He calls into action the Understanding by the light of the Word which He has inspired, to act directly upon the mind through its Intuitions. These are not opposing influences, but working

in perfect harmony, to produce the same results. The Spirit does not supersede the existence of the reasoning powers. In fact, these are necessary to open the channels through which He can operate; and the wider their action, the wider scope is there for His own immediate action.

The light of the Gospel is sufficient to bring the sinner, through the Holy Spirit, into immediate contact with Christ as his Saviour. We cannot remain long in the presence of any superior being without feeling his influence; and in proportion to the wisdom and excellence of the individual with whom we come in contact, must be our confidence in him. This law applies to *fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ* through the Holy Spirit. The simplest views of Divine Truth are enough to enable us to hold intercourse with God; and *they that know His name will put their trust in Him*. The Holy Spirit is God's Advocate, not merely *convincing us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*; but the very object for which He thus convinces is that the enmity of the carnal mind may be destroyed, and that He may bring us into loving Trust in Him.

The Divine Life is a life of Confidence in

God. This is its principle, and this is its source. In the degree in which we understand Him in His Holy Word, we shall seek fellowship with Him; in the degree in which we seek fellowship with Him, we shall increase in Confidence towards Him; and the strength of our Confidence in Him will be the measure of our life in Him. IN HIM WE LIVE, AND MOVE, AND HAVE OUR BEING; and it is this confidence in Him which gives us the degree of our spiritual life, and the clear consciousness of dwelling in Him, and He in us.

As soon as the mind begins to follow the teachings of Divine Truth, it begins to emerge from the natural into the supernatural world. It does not cease to be natural—in fact, it only begins to realise the perfection of its own nature—but it begins to be influenced by those forces which bring human nature under the immediate control of the Divine Nature, and by which it sees, notwithstanding its own sinfulness, *that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.* In view of this reconciliation, sinful man is enabled to contemplate the Divine attributes, even of Justice and Holiness, with the utmost confidence and delight. Thus the mind does


not originate a single spiritual thought : it simply thinks in connection with spiritual truth, and this produces spiritual Confidence.

The want of a clear understanding of this subject has produced Rationalism on the one hand, and Mysticism on the other. The Speculative Philosophy of Germany, with but few exceptions, has fallen into this error ; and the tendency of our own country, at the present time, is in the same direction. It has striven, by a process of Dialectics, or by a mystical Intuition, to produce the spiritual life ; but, as every step in an opposite direction leads further away from the starting-point—like voyagers sailing on the great ocean in opposite directions, and meeting in the cold, barren, impassable Polar regions—it has landed, at last, in some impenetrable ice-bound region, without light, life, or hope.

Man must begin with the natural, because he has nothing else to begin with ; but it is only as the knowledge that he gains is concentrated upon himself as a spiritual being, and upon God, who is a Spirit, that we can realise a sense of the Divine Presence. Just as, in the exercise of the natural faculties, we gain confidence in the truth which we verify, so all insight into


our spiritual nature, by the light of Divine Truth, must awaken our Spiritual consciousness to the great facts of Redemption and the work of the Holy Spirit. It is, however, only as the Divine Spirit calls into exercise our natural faculties, that our knowledge can become spiritual, and that it can increase our Confidence in God, or bring us near to Him in Faith. There is a truth both in Rationalism and Mysticism ; but the one aims at the natural without the spiritual, the other at the spiritual without the natural. There have been some beautiful specimens of humanity, both in connection with Rationalism and Mysticism ; but in each instance there has always been some great counteracting truth in connection with the error ; and in the degree in which the one or the other error has predominated, the beauty has been marred.

We must ever remember that, when the mind acts, it acts as a whole, and, whilst ideally we may distinguish between its several faculties, we cannot separate them in their higher action. Each faculty is necessary to the existence of the other, just as water is the compound of two gases, and we cannot remove either without destroying all that constitutes it water. In the mind, whilst the less does not include the



greater, the greater always includes the less ; and, as the spiritual life is so much greater than the natural life, it cannot be called into action without diffusing itself through every faculty of the soul and every function of the body. There is no necessary connection between the natural and the spiritual, but there is between the spiritual and the natural. Nothing spiritual can be spiritual to us until it passes through the Intelligence, the Sensibility, and the Will. The Bible nowhere ignores natural power, but simply shows its insufficiency without Divine help.

A vast amount of error has gathered round the Christian Faith because the early interpreters of the Bible have not considered sufficiently the facts of spiritual consciousness. They have sought to interpret the language of Scripture by the vocabulary of the ancient schools, which knew not the Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation. This was the error of the early Fathers, and of much of the Patristic Theology. Too often the Christian Faith was founded by them upon a series of doctrinal propositions, borrowed chiefly from Greece and Rome, instead of analyses of their own minds in relation to Divine Truth. If we take, for example, from



most of our systems of theology all that has been derived from Plato and Aristotle, it is astonishing how little we have left. Systems of theology should consist of Divine Truth in regard to the human mind; therefore, nothing can be more misleading than to attach great importance to their authority, when they are influenced to so great an extent by the Heathen Philosophy, which did not understand the differentia between the natural and Spiritual Life.

The design of the Bible is not to teach the relation of body and soul, except as they are both related to the spirit. The former are questions of Physiology and Psychology; the latter, like *life and immortality, can only be brought to light by the Gospel*. Under the old economy, the spiritual nature of man was seen but dimly. The Faith of Abel, Enoch, Abraham, and Job, not could have been much more than an intense Spiritual Intuition, produced by immediate intercourse with God, aided by vivid conceptions of Him as revealed in Nature. Their thoughts and images were to a great extent sensuous rather than spiritual. Even the Psalms are only higher forms of the same conceptions. It is only the Holy Spirit in connection with Redemption that can give full

expansion to the spiritual life, and bring all the faculties into harmony with spiritual truth.

A great part of the controversy on Sir Wm. Hamilton's Philosophy of the Unconditioned, and on Dr. Mansel's Bampton Lectures, has arisen from the want of a clearer distinction between our intellectual and our spiritual nature. Man, as a merely rational being, has no necessary connection with God. It is through his spiritual nature that he rises to the consciousness of His presence. *God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.* Mr. Heard says: "In so far as man is a rational being, he is not the *offspring* of God, but the *creature*. God is said to be the Father of spirits, not of intellects. We cannot make an abstraction, as Plato did, of the universal *Nous* or reason, and say that man is divine because his reason is a spark kindled from the universal mind. Thus far, then, Professor Mansel was right, like Archbishop King a century ago, in saying that there was an analogy only, not a likeness of nature, between God and man. . . . To this extent Professor Mansel, following in the wake of Sir Wm. Hamilton, was incontestably right. It is by Faith, and not by Reason, that we learn the ways

of God. Reason not being that part of our nature in which we are like God, we cannot by discourse of Reason know God.

But, on the other hand, there was a truth in Mr. Maurice's and other replies to the Bampton Lecturer. They denied that we know God only by inference. They asserted that Faith is something more than a blind submission of Reason to what is logically inconceivable. They were right in what they denied and what they affirmed. But, for want of this distinction of soul and spirit, they failed to make this clear, that while the reasonable soul only understands what God is not, it never can rise above a negative idea: the spirit rises to a higher consciousness, both that God is and what God is" (Heb. xi. 6).¹

Thus, whilst *the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, they being spiritually discerned*, there may be, in connection with the Divine Spirit, inspiring the mind with confidence towards God, a Spiritual Intuition, which will enable man by Faith *to dwell in God and God in him*; and which may form the data of the grandest possible abstractions

¹ Tripartite Nature of Man, by Rev. J. B. Heard, M.A., p. 91.

concerning Him. *The Spirit itself, bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God*, may bring us into the most perfect Trust in Him, and the most perfect *affinity* with Him. The spirit within us, *which cries Abba, Father*, must have a distinct knowledge of the Father's attributes.

All man wants is the light which will lead to God, and some great Reconciler between himself and God, when he comes to Him. This he has in perfection in the Gospel of Christ and His Atonement. The weakest, the vilest can come to God through Him, and be brought into a state of living union with Him. By Faith the feeblest spirit can rise to *heavenly place in Christ Jesus, and dwell in the secret place of the Most High*. Thus, while Faith is, in every sense in which it can be, a supernatural power, in every sense in which it is the duty of a moral agent, it is the voluntary exercise of the natural faculties of the mind: thus glorifying God in Christ, by the Conscience again becoming spiritual, and awakening to the likeness of Christ, and glorifying man together with Christ, by raising him to *fellowship with the Father and with the Son Jesus Christ*.

SECTION III.

FAITH IN RELATION TO HUMAN REASON.

We have seen that Faith has two distinct, but closely related, senses, into one or other of which all its applications may be resolved. We have seen that, in one sense, it is holding something for true or real; in the other it is trust, confidence, or committal to something. It is possible to commit ourselves to an object of which we have but a very imperfect knowledge; and it is possible to have an extensive knowledge of any subject without having any practical sympathy with it, because it is only as the Will chooses to act that it can influence the mind in reference to any truth. It is easily seen that there can be but little difficulty in connection with our more intuitive beliefs; but, when the mind begins to unfold itself, when it expands into the regions of abstract truth, and to form all its knowledge into spiritual principles, it is then that the great difficulty commences. Truth has never answered its ultimate end until it has been brought into harmony with our spiritual consciousness, and the God of all truth has become more fully an object of Faith. Faith can never be opposed to Reason when

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both are properly understood, because Truth is one, and can never be opposed to itself. True Reason and true Faith are simply the eye beholding and the hand grasping the same object ; and our confidence in any object must increase in the degree in which we understand it.

No two words, perhaps, have been oftener misapplied than Reason and Faith. Every ignorant prejudice or opinion has claimed Reason for its parent, and almost every conceivable contradiction has been presented as an object of Faith. We have talked of the simplicity of the Gospel when our simplicity has been nothing more than some narrow prejudice, or some crude notion, which has little or no connection with the glorious Gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Many have abused Rome for holding that religious light is intellectual darkness, and that Faith is in its highest exercise when least connected with the intelligence; who, at the same time, have considered it the pride of the natural mind to seek for a *reason of the hope that is in them*. All the teachings of the Bible appeal to the Intelligence, the Sensibility, and the Will ; and to admit that Christian Faith is not dependent upon the in-

telligent action of the mind is to surrender all that is virtuous in the Christian Life. It is through the Intelligence that we receive convictions of truth, and the strength of our Faith will depend upon the strength of our conviction. We have been too ready to concede the palpable contradiction—that a doctrine may be true to Faith that is false to Reason. Is it conceivable that God could give to man a Revelation of His Will without giving him the faculty by which it can be verified? There may be false Faith or false Reason; but, when both are true, they will be in perfect harmony.

Perhaps in nothing have we a clearer illustration of the value of the Inductive Method of reasoning than in adjusting the claims of Reason and Faith. If a small portion of what has been written in defence of the one and the other had been employed in ascertaining what Faith and Reason really are, we should have found that their claims are not difficult to adjust. The error has not been in claiming for either Faith or Reason too much, but in denying the claims of either the one or the other. If Reason is simply the faculty of thought or intelligence, and Faith the power by which we hold the Truth which it reveals, there cannot possibly

exist between them any necessary conflict ; and, whatever may be their expansion, they must, when in accordance with Divine Truth, extend into more perfect harmony.

This does not imply that every truth believed can be presented in a Logical form. Faith must ever be the concrete of which the Logical Understanding is the abstract. Faith is *the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*. Whether the state of the mind be sensational, emotional, intellectual, intuitional, or logical, in relation to any truth, Faith is the power which holds the truth and commits itself to it. The truth may be connected purely with the Higher Reason, to which the Logical Understanding can never rise ; but it can never be received by Faith until it is a subject of consciousness.

Faith, as a rule, begins with intuitions of truth. The mind in relation to the spiritual life can scarcely be said to possess, at the first, either ideas or faculties ; but only a germinal nature in which they exist, which, as it is evolved by outward stimuli, brings the ideas and faculties into active being. We read of *Faith growing exceedingly*. At first, like the child reposing upon its parent, without possessing any

enlightened views of parental government, it is more sensational than rational, more connected with the Sensibility than the Will,—its force is *potential* rather than actual ; but, as it comes in contact with the great work of spiritual thought and action, it rises into distinctness and grows into maturity. Faith, like all nature, begins with the lower and rises to the higher. The branch does not bear the root, but the root the branch. Hence it is the Intuitional, rather than the Logical, form of thought that must be insisted upon at the first. Faith, in its beginning, is simply a spiritual perception before it is perplexed with definitions or reasonings, which presuppose the higher cultivation of the Intellect.

The data of all reasonings, in relation to Divine Truth, are furnished by the word of God ; and the first thing aimed at by the early Christians seems to have been the awakening of the Spiritual Consciousness by the Divine Word, and the bringing men into immediate intercourse with a Living, Personal, Christ. The bond of union was an intense belief in Him as the centre of the great facts of Redemption. All true Christians come near each other in their belief in the fundamental truths of Christianity, because these are dogmas connected with the

intuitional rather than with the logical forms of thought. They involve only a simple trust in the great historical facts of the Saviour's life and death, resurrection, and ascension ; and the life which springs from Faith in these must be, to a great extent, uniform. It is when we come to systems of Theology, including of necessity human interpretations, definitions, and reasonings, that we meet with the great divergence from this unity. But the greatest divergence has arisen from the fact that some of the ablest theological writers have paid the least regard to fundamental truths. The Intuitions of the mind have been mere forms of thought, without regard to the facts of the Bible. They wanted a fruitful tree, but they insisted on beginning with the fruit, branches, or trunk, and then tried to put life into it, and were surprised to find it incapable of life.

Christian Faith at first is not a science, but a life ; and it can only become a science as it springs from a life. It can only become a system of logical thought as it originates in simple trust in Christ and in the great verities of Scripture. The man who cannot, as a first condition, embrace these, the evidence of which is so clear to every sincere seeker

after Divine Truth, is in no state by which he can possibly become a Christian.

Rationalism is an attempt to exhibit Christianity simply as a system of logical thought, based upon certain fundamental definitions, and to erect upon them a complete superstructure of doctrine. In this way Christianity becomes a body of truth purely human, acknowledging nothing but the laws of the understanding, the historical element simply designating the time and the circumstances in which it first began to be developed as a moral science. But this is a superstructure without a foundation. Whilst by Reason we have the power of co-ordinating all the other intellectual processes, so as to give rise to human convictions, enabling us to adapt ourselves to the universe in which we live, there can be no development of Christian Faith without the data which the fundamental truths of Christianity give us ; and, until we stand upon the Rock of Ages, it is in vain to begin to build.

There is no necessary conflict between Reason and the Knowledge of Christ ; but sin has filled the mind with *imagination*s, and *high things which exalt themselves against the knowledge of Christ* ; and, until these are cast down, and every

thought brought into captivity to Him, the mind is destitute of the first condition of Christian Faith. The mind has to grow down into Christ, and find its *root* in Him, as well as grow up into Him, its Living Head in all things. Humility is the root of Faith, which must first strike deep into Christ before we can produce a single branch or shoot; and in this root we have the principle of all development. Faith is not a mere subjective feeling, as distinct from things: it contains in it the germ of all growth. The highest attainments of Christian life are said to be within the power of Faith, because Faith, in its simplest form, embraces Christ, and in its greatest expansion can only comprehend more perfectly the infinite excellences of Christ.

It was the error of the early Christian Church, that, instead of striking its roots deeper and deeper in Christ, it began to attach more importance to human dogmas respecting Him than to Christ Himself. It was a natural consequence of Scriptural interpretation, definition, and reasoning, that there should be dogma; and it was thought by the successors of the apostles that they must agree on certain Articles of Faith, in order to preserve *the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*; but the whole history of Christ-

ianity is a proof against this error. Every dogma is of necessity some human element added to Divine Truth, and will be understood differently by succeeding generations, according to the tendencies of different minds that receive it. The meaning of dogma, (*δόγμα* from *δοκεῖν*, to think, seem, appear,) shows that there must be Christian dogma. If we believe, it must be in some distinct notion of Christian truth; but no dogma can stand the fires of time, amidst the revolutions of human thought, that is not some clear declaration of Scripture, or some synthesis of universal truth, having its root immediately in a Living, Personal, Christ. The departure from this simple principle has been the cause of nearly all the wars in Christendom.

We will mention but one example in modern times in which this principle has been illustrated. We refer to the largest existing Protestant sect—the followers of John Wesley. Whatever differences have troubled them in reference to Church Government, nearly every branch of them is perfectly at one in Christian doctrine; and, whilst every other Church is at the present moment distracted by irreconcilable differences, they, in this respect, are in complete harmony. What is the reason of this? They

have produced a fair average of scholars and thinkers ; and, taking them as a whole, they are by no means lacking either in independency of judgment or of action—their differences on Church government will prove this—and yet they continue perfectly one in all the essentials of Christian doctrine. We believe that the reason may be found in the nature of their standards. Their agreement is experimental rather than dogmatical. John Wesley was not indifferent to sound doctrine;—his many controversial works will prove that;—but his only tests of doctrine were expressed in his sermons and Notes on the New Testament, which contain self-evident truths, arising immediately out of the Spiritual Life. These truths, taken in their natural sense, known experimentally, and sung from day to day in Charles Wesley's incomparable hymns, will go far to account for the remarkable conservation of Christian doctrine among them.


All Christian Faith must be guided by an observation of facts, which must necessarily be tried by the canons of Induction ; and, so far as it involves ratiocination, the approved rules of Reason must determine its validity. The rules by which we test our Intuitions suppose a

logical process. A thing that is logically true may be as certain as any truth connected with the Higher Reason ; and what is true may be fixed ; but there is only a narrow region in which necessary truth can be logically demonstrated in its several relations, and, however narrow, dogma, to command the continuous assent of the Church, can never transcend these limits. Dogma, like all truth connected with the Higher Reason, must be a necessary and self-evident deduction from Scripture, and all Faith that has its root in Christ will grow in accordance with this law.

There is no necessity to divorce Reason from Faith, in order to rise into the higher regions of Christian thought. *What God has joined together, let no man put asunder.* But we must ever remember the fact, that neither Reason nor Faith can transcend the boundaries of Revelation ; and that the object of both is to bring us into fellowship with God—the Creator of the human mind and the Revealer of Himself. A thousand questions may be asked respecting the nature and relations of the Infinite ; but no data have been given us as the basis of any logical induction. Our Faith may embrace truths intuitively which cannot be analysed, be-

cause other cognate truths may not be discernible with which to compare them. We can only reason on any particular truth by referring the species to some genus with which we are more familiar; but this is impossible in reference to Divine Truth, because our only datum is from the consciousness of God in the mind, through the light that He has given. Logical reasoning cannot transcend our ideas: it can only show their true relation. It makes our knowledge more distinct; it does not expand the horizon of our mental vision. The object of Revelation is to bring us into a higher region of actual experience, and every synthesis of Divine Truth may be analysed in relation to all truth.

We must never forget that the Author of the Bible is also the Author of our mental constitution. Every primary testimony of consciousness must be true. If our faculties are not trustworthy, then there can be no certainty in anything. We can only know and believe what we are conscious of knowing and believing. Consciousness is the Self, the subject to which we must ultimately appeal in all mental and spiritual phenomena. The truth may be subjective or objective, intuitional or logical: we can only be



affected by it as we become conscious of it. There may be a great outlying world of truth of which we are conscious, but which we cannot understand in its several relations. Our highest knowledge deepens the conviction that we know nothing perfectly : but our knowledge, though limited, is real as far as it goes. In religion our consciousness is the same as in morals, in the daily duties of life, and in our social relations. We are conscious that what we perceive are real properties of beings, not mere subjective affections ; immediate entities, attaching to substance, and not essentially affected by any conceptions of the mind : and God and truth are to us realities. Our thoughts may be limited, but we can, as far as we think, think correctly.

When we speak of Faith being above Reason, it is necessary that we should define what we mean. Faith and Reason are co-ordinate terms. Knowledge has well been termed the *conditio sine quâ non* of Faith. Reason being thought or intelligence, it is impossible for Faith to exist without it. The Faith that is not connected with the understanding cannot be from God. There are unrevealed truths connected with all revealed truth. There must be much mystery in all that relates to God. Mystery is

simply a higher region of truth, which is seen by us but dimly, and which the mind feels a pleasure in contemplating. It loves to stretch the eye into the dim, the ancient, the unknown. Faith loves to realize distant worlds which the Higher Reason alone can discover. In the Bible we have the most magnificent blending of light and shade, losing itself amidst the shadows of the horizon of the invisible world, into which, like a telescope, it points, and partially unveils its wonders : so that, *believing, we can rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. True, great is the mystery of Godliness ;* but it is like the mystery of the midnight heavens in all their grand array of constellations, *declaring the glory of God.* It is like the unfathomable depths of the great ocean, whose waves are as much a reality to us as its depths.

There are mysteries in the Bible which can never be fully revealed. Take, for example, the Trinity in Unity. There is much in connection with this great truth that has not been made known to us ; but what has been revealed is no greater mystery to us than any other questions respecting the Infinite. What we are asked to believe in is Divine Personality, Divine Essence, and Divine Unity. What the exact

relation between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is, or what the Divine Essence is, can probably never be understood by the finite mind ; but that the doctrine is clearly revealed in the Bible it seems impossible to deny, and what we do not know cannot detract from what we do know. We have no concern about what is hidden, only with what is revealed ; and there is enough revealed in this world for this short life.

Thus Faith, in its simplest form, is the Trust of a sinner in Christ as his Saviour : in its higher relations, it expands into universal truth. It cannot be opposed to Reason, but only co-extensive with it, and must be limited by its discoveries of revealed truth. It is the only possible condition in the Divine Life, and the only connecting link between earth and heaven. Whilst it calls forth the active powers of the mind, it can, by a sense of dependence upon God, *partake of the Divine nature*. It can exist upon earth, or ascend to *heavenly places with Christ Jesus*. Whilst Revelation, like the solar rays, sheds light around life's dark path, Faith rises in loving Trust to the great Source of spiritual light ; and, whilst we *cannot by searching find out God to perfection*, Faith receives *the fulness of riches in glory by Christ Jesus*.

SECTION IV.


FAITH AS A PRACTICAL PRINCIPLE.

The present is an age of Science, but more especially a Practical Age. We believe most strongly in the Applied Sciences. The Christian religion is a science, because its principles can be reduced to a system of truth intelligible to all intelligent minds; but it is also an art which may be practised by many who do not understand it as a science. Many complain that they cannot understand Christianity as a science, but they can easily understand it in its practical relations; and, if they would only practise what they know, they would soon enlarge the sphere of their knowledge. God estimates every man's knowledge by the practical effect which it produces upon his life and upon the world. Many who are sceptical profess to be sincere inquirers after truth; but do they sincerely apply the truth they have already found? No man who will apply the knowledge he has gained can remain long in error. The adaptation of the sincere mind to truth is so perfect that it will be drawn to it as by magnetic power. To deny this is to undermine all truth and all morality. Nearly every science can be under-

stood sufficiently by the ordinary mind to believe in it; and Christianity is more easily understood, even as a science, than any one of the physical sciences. But it is as an ART rather than as a science that Christianity is given to man. For one man of science there are a thousand artisans. There are many who, whilst they cannot understand a thing as a science, can practise it as an art. The arts of life, in their more rudimental forms, are independent of science. The artisan very rarely has the opportunity of mastering his art as a science. In many instances, the study of the one would be incompatible with the practice of the other. It may be, for example, important that an engine-driver should understand the scientific construction of his engine, but it is of infinitely greater importance to him to manage the steam aright. The neglect of the latter for the study of the former would be culpable in the highest degree. It is the duty of every man to gain the utmost possible knowledge, but it is imperative that he should apply his acquirements to the great objects of knowledge.

Faith is an active principle—it is a life—not an assent merely to formal propositions: it only becomes Christian Faith when it embodies the

life as well as the death of Christ. Every truth must have its ultimate design, and the design of Christian Faith is, by trusting Christ, to reproduce His life. Faith, in its practical tendency, is obedience to the truth ; and Christ, in His life and death, is a practical manifestation of the truth. Faith is not a state in which we place ourselves once for all : it is an action of the soul, renewing its life from day to day by a constant sense of dependence upon Christ, and by a sense of entire consecration to Him. The object of Christianity is not an abstract truth. It is a fact, a person—it is Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. We believe in Christianity only as it leads us to Christ, and as it throws light upon the life and death of Christ, and as we receive the mind of Christ. Many have taken the principle of Faith for the life of Faith. They have confounded the Faith which justifies with that which sanctifies. Hence the supposed contradiction between St. Paul and St. James. St. Paul affirms *that we are justified by Faith* ; St. James that *we are justified by works*—the word justify in each instance signifying to make right. St. Paul is speaking of what would justify a sinner, St. James of what would justify a saint. The former refers



to the *remission of sins that are past*, the latter to *the life of faith of the Son of God*. St. Paul speaks of *the works of the Law*, St. James of *the works of Faith*. *Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth*. His death being our perfect justification, and His life our perfect sanctification, it follows that, as we take hold of Him, we necessarily become perfectly justified and sanctified. In this sense, by works is our Faith made perfect ; the virtue of the Saviour's sacrifice flowing into every cell and through every artery of our spiritual nature, moving us to think as He thought and to act as He acted.

Thus it will be seen that the principle of Faith is always the same, whether it be applied to a distant star, a distant country, some historical testimony, or some revealed truth. We may hold the truth without applying it, or we may apply it to wrong objects. We may hold it so feebly that, though disciples of Christ, He must say to us, *O ye of little Faith* ; or we may hold it so firmly that He must say, *Great is thy Faith ; be it unto thee even as thou wilt*. The difference in men is not in the nature, but in the quality, of their Faith. Many have no deep convictions of truth. They do not take

hold of it so firmly as to move them to earnest action. They have Faith, but it is a *dead Faith which profits them nothing*. When it is a living Faith in Christ, it will manifest His life, His meekness, His sympathy, His zeal, His benevolence, His self-sacrifice. Until it accomplishes this effect it may be the Faith of devils—for *the devils believe and tremble*—but it is not the Faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, *who went about doing good*. We often hear it said concerning some of the best workers in the Christian Church that they are men of but one idea. Yes, and that one idea is worth a thousand which many possess. One simple idea concerning Christ, grasped firmly and applied rightly and earnestly, will effect more than all knowledge combined without this intensity.

Hume asked the question, why Reason could not be substituted for Faith, and sneered at a religion founded upon credulity. But it will be seen that nothing can be more opposed to credulity than Faith. It is that grand central power in the mind which demands the exercise of every other power and includes the highest exercises of Reason. At the same time, whilst Reason in its greatest expansion has no moral

element in it, Faith contains in it the highest possible virtues, because it impels to the greatest and best activity. In the state, in commerce, in the family, in the Church, it is Confidence that binds all together, and gives force to all activity. Destroy Confidence, and all is at once destroyed : and this is true above everything in reference to God in Christ, With confidence in Him, we can cast our burden upon Him, suffer with Him, be persecuted for His sake, be resigned amidst poverty and neglect, because He was poor and neglected, and amidst the darkness of the grave exclaim, *O death, where is thy sting ! Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

“The Platonist exhorted men to imitate God ; the Stoic to follow Reason ; Epictetus urged his disciples to set before them an ideal sage, and to imagine him continually near them ; but the utmost the Stoic ideal could become was a model for imitation and admiration : its inspirations could never awaken confidence nor enkindle affection. It was reserved for Christianity to present an Ideal Character, which, through the changes of eighteen centuries, has inspired the hearts of all classes of men with that trust and affection which have subdued the sage and con-

quered the savage ;" ¹ which, from Himself, has given to the world a system of Faith that to the Philosopher is the grandest possible science, and to the most ignorant the simplest possible art. Who can reach the lofty height of Redeeming Love ? Who cannot—what little child cannot—Trust the loving Saviour ? What, as a subject of thought, is there so profound as the Christian Faith ; but what so simple in its application to all the wants of man—taxing the highest powers of the mind, but requiring no more from the weakest than is possible even in its extremest weakness !

¹ Lecky's *European Morals*, vol. ii., page 11.

“ It is not what my hands have done
That weighs my spirit down,
That casts a shadow o’er the sun,
And over earth a frown.
It is not any heinous guilt,
Or vice by men abhorred ;
For fair the fame that I have built,
A fair life’s just reward ;
And men would wonder if they knew
How sad I feel with sins so few.

Alas ! they only see in part,
When thus they judge the whole ;
They cannot look upon the heart,
They cannot read the soul.
But I survey myself within,
And mournfully I feel
How deep the principle of sin
Its root may there conceal,
And spread its poison through the frame,
Without a deed that men could blame.”

Henry Ware, Jun.



"The speech of God which produces the works of Creation is that immutable reason from which they flow, and by which they are perfected—not an evanescent voice merely, but a living energy, reaching the farthest extremities of nature and the most distant ages. In this manner God speaks to His holy angels; but to them audibly; to us otherwise, on account of our grosser apprehensions. But, when we perceive through our internal ears some faint notices of this Divine speech, we approach the Angels."—*Augustine.*

"As to the value of conversion God alone can judge. God alone can know how wide are the steps which the soul has to take before it can approach to a community with Him, to the dwelling of the perfect, or the intercourse and friendship with higher natures."—*Goethe.*

"St. John, accustomed to look upon God *as He is related to us*, considers His essential attribute to be love, and directs us therefore to become one with God by cultivating the affections. In speaking of the soul, therefore, as distinguished from the spirit, although both terms include our moral and intellectual nature, yet, in the first, intellect or reason is the predominant idea, while in the second, though knowledge is not excluded, the principal idea is of charity or love."—*Dr. T. Arnold.*

CHAPTER IV.

HUMAN POWER IN CONVERSION.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."—*Ps.* li. 10.

"Make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die?"—*Ezek.* xviii. 31.

"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—*Matt.* xviii. 3.

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."—*John* i. 13.

"I have begotten you through the gospel."—*1 Cor.* iv. 15.

"Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth."—*1 Pet.* i. 22.

"Without Me ye can do nothing."—*John* xv. 5.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."—*Phil.* iv. 13.

IN the last chapter we considered the distinction between our Natural Beliefs and Christian Faith, and the harmony between Faith and Reason. We now propose to analyse the principles of that Life which is the necessary result of true faith in God. The initial stage of the Divine Life in Scripture is known by

such terms as Conversion, Regeneration, or the New Birth. These terms express the germs of the Christian Life and the principle of all its perfection.


SECTION I.

MAN'S NEED OF CONVERSION.

It is natural to suppose that the Great Teacher, who attached so much importance to Repentance and Faith, would give equal prominence to Conversion. Repentance and Faith are but the means to this great end. In all the conditions of the Divine Life we suppose the Divine Life itself, and that life originates in Conversion. He who came down from heaven, to guide man to heaven, would certainly give the primary place to this, the only qualification for heaven; and He who knew what was in man would surely reveal to him the mysteries of the heavenly life.

Before Christ came, man needed some teacher wiser than the wisest sages of the past. Every instructor had failed—every system of philosophy, every school of ethics, every form of religion, had failed to give a knowledge of God. *The world by wisdom knew not God.* It had received wise counsels, noble maxims, righteous

laws, but all proved inadequate to renew the human heart, and to arrest the tide of evil which flowed onward from age to age, overwhelming mankind in misery and death. *The whole world lay in wickedness. Darkness had covered the earth, and gross darkness the people.* Sin often lost much of its deformity, and concealed much of its repulsiveness, beneath the attractions of education and refinement ; but all that man could devise could not remove the impurity from within. Frequently the streams of evil were turned into under currents, no longer visible to the eye, but no less certainly undermining the foundations of human virtue. The tree had been cultivated with the utmost possible care ; *but, when man looked that it should bring forth grapes, it brought forth wild grapes—the grapes of Sodom, whose clusters were bitter.* Man had received his nature from a tainted ancestry ; every generation had left it more and more corrupt, until, instead of possessing the image of God, he became *earthly, sensual, devilish.* The heart had become so *deceitful, so desperately wicked, that it could not even be known ;* and the lament was, among those who tried to rise to a purer life, that *when they would do good, evil was present with them.* They often



cried for help, but no help came. *The deep said, It is not in me: and the sea said, It is not in me. Man knew not the price thereof, neither could it be found in the land of the living.*

Nor was this sense of helplessness confined to the ignorant and barbarous. Those whose lives were most pure were most deeply conscious of their depravity and guilt; and those who had the clearest knowledge of Divine things felt most painfully the necessity of some Divine Change. They felt their need of light to shine upon the path of life; but they most deeply felt their need of some living power by which they could *cease to do evil, and learn to do well.*

And there is a remarkable correspondence in relation to the religious life, between the Ancient Heathen philosophers and Modern Rationalists. There is the same restlessness, the same dissatisfaction, the same gulf between them and a holy personal God, the same tacit acknowledgment of the utter failure of all their theories and plans, and the same conscious need of some radical change. Although the Rationalists refuse to accept of the Divine Plan, the idea of Regeneration haunts their philosophy in its most impious departures from

God. With or without a God, philosophy cannot escape the sense of the necessity of a change, to fit man for a state for which he is consciously predestined. If Christ is not the *Way, the Truth, and the Life*, then sinful man needs some being like the ideal which Christ presents.

Man needs a change, not only outward, but inward ; he needs, not merely to be reformed, but to be *transformed by the renewing of his mind*, before he can *prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*. And this is the great object of the Saviour's coming : *I am come*, He said, *that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again. And this is life eternal, to believe in the true and living God, and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent*. The life of Christ was one grand expression of the principle of Conversion. He lived that He might show us how to live ; He died, and rose again, that we might *die indeed unto sin*, and *be quickened together with Him*. *He ever lives, to make intercession for us*, and has sent His quickening Spirit into the world, that He may *renew us in righteousness and in true holiness*.

It is an instructive fact that the Saviour gave the greatest prominence to Conversion when addressing the wiser and better classes of men. He did not speak of it so much when with the vilest and worst. It was taken for granted that they needed it, but He urged it upon such men as Nicodemus, the young ruler, and His own disciples. It is probable, if the Jewish nation could have been searched, that these, of all others, would have been thought least to need Conversion. They were not only Jews—the chosen people of God—but stood among the highest in the virtues of the Jewish religion. It is probable that each represented a distinct type of Jewish excellence. Nicodemus was an *honourable counsellor*; the young ruler had *kept the commandments from his youth up*; and the disciples had *left all and followed Christ*; and had taken it for granted that the highest places in the kingdom of heaven were reserved for them. But to the first He said, *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again*; to the second, *One thing thou lackest*; and to the third, *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*. The fact that the disciples were disputing who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven was the

strongest proof that, although they had changed in their outward relation to Christ, they were altogether unlike Him *who made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant.*

The history of humanity has been that of pride and selfishness, and consequently of misery and death. Selfishness, in all its forms, necessarily generates evil of every kind. Conversion reverses the current of man's affections, makes them flow forth in streams of pure benevolence : and everything lives where its waters flow. Selfishness is death ; benevolence is life. These are no arbitrary principles, but are necessarily the sources of evil and good, of happiness and misery. Our real life consists in our ruling affections ; and, in Conversion, love to God and man becomes the governing principle of the mind, so that we partake of the Divine Benevolence. This is what every fallen man needs, and this is what the Divine Teacher came to teach. The history of humanity proves that, whilst the greatest external accomplishments leave man *poor and wretched, and blind and naked*, and the most perfect moral discipline only reveals more clearly his guilt and misery, Regeneration proves to be a new Birth of heavenly

virtues, opens up pure springs of heavenly peace, and gives a clear consciousness of the favour of God and the earnest of the life everlasting.

SECTION II.

THE NATURE OF CONVERSION.


We use the term Conversion (ἐπιστροφή) in preference to Regeneration (παλιγγενεσία), because it is more frequently employed and more generally understood. Conversion supposes Regeneration, and expresses not merely the change itself, but the *process* by which it is accomplished. This change, as SEEN in man, is best expressed by Conversion, and, as FELT in man, by Regeneration. Conversion, like Regeneration, is the work of the Holy Spirit; but, in the two instances in which the term Regeneration occurs in the New Testament,¹ it represents the more immediate work of the Spirit, apart from human agency. Both Regeneration and Conversion are necessary parts of the one Divine Change. We read of turning to God, of a change of mind from pride to humility, from truth to error, from selfishness to benevolence, from sin to holiness; also we read of the Holy Spirit renewing,

¹ Matt. xix. 28; Tit. iii. 5.

quickenings, and sanctifying. There is no contradiction in these terms, but they are synonymous, expressing the various relations and stages of this great change.

It is very clear from the language of Scripture that, in Conversion, no change takes place in the essence of the soul, no insertion of new faculties, no creation of new powers; but the bringing into activity powers that were either dead or dormant, and the turning into a right direction a life of which the aims and tendencies were wrong and sinful. It is a resurrection of the Spirit in man, which had become dead in trespasses and in sins. It is its transition from death to life; its awaking from the consciousness of sin to the sense of holiness. The Conscience, whilst it retains all that distinguishes it as such, now becomes the principle of Spiritual life, and the fountain of pure benevolence. Whilst the Conscience retains all its power as a moral faculty, all its operations become governed by a principle of holy love.

Man does not require new faculties—HE POSSESSES ALL THAT ADAM POSSESSED BEFORE HE FELL—but he has lost the capability of using them for God and Divine things. His spiritual nature is under the influence of sin, which



worketh death. Sin, like a fatal disease, has paralysed it, and made it *subject to the law of sin and death*. But, in Conversion, the Spirit quickens man's fallen spirit into newness of life, and the Great Physician restores to it spiritual health. *With His stripes we are healed.*

When Adam fell, he committed himself to the gratification of his own desires rather than doing the will of God ; and the downward tendency became so strong that nothing less than the power of Redemption could arrest it, and restore to man his original righteousness. The process by which this is accomplished is Conversion. By the operations of Divine Grace the Holy Spirit so moves upon the Sensibility and the Intellect that the Conscience becomes sensible of spiritual truth, and is quickened into spiritual life and power.

As soon as man fell, Redemption was promised ; so that God never withdrew from man His Spirit. He continued to shine into his mind ; but it was a mind whose *every imagination and thought was evil, and that continually*. The mind of man in reference to God was like the earth when the Spirit of God first moved upon it. *It was without form, and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And*

God said, Let there be light; and there was light. Had God withdrawn His Spirit from man, Conversion would have been impossible. But, from the first promise of Redemption, *God's Spirit so strove with man*, both by His immediate influence upon the mind, and by the revelation of the Divine will, that there was always light enough to awaken his spiritual nature. Thus, whilst man was *without God and without hope in the world*, there was still a *Spirit in man* which, though dead towards God, was still capable of being *quickened into newness of life*. It existed there as a *δύναμις*, or capacity, not as an *ἐνέργεια*, or active principle. It was not destroyed, but sin had dominion over it, and it became completely insensible to the claims of God and the Spiritual Life.


The spirit in the natural man has sunk below the horizon of the world of spiritual light and love, into the stormy regions of human passion, pride, and selfishness; but Conversion turns the spirit round into the sunshine of the Divine Countenance. God, instead of man, becomes its standard of moral excellence; benevolence, instead of selfishness, its governing principle; and God's Word, instead of human laws, its only Guide. *The Spirit itself bears witness with his spirit that he is a child of God.*

In the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, we have a description of the process by which the mind is transformed from a natural to a spiritual state. We see the spirit struggling against the law of God, in order to be free. Conscience is brought under the influence of Divine Truth, and begins to assert its right, but without the necessary power to enforce it. Man cries out, in agony, *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* but, as soon as he exercises Faith in the Atonement, he can exclaim, *I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord.* He is not only *justified freely from all things by the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus*; but *there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made him free from the law of sin and death.* Thus Repentance, Faith, and Conversion spring from the same principle. Each alike is the work of the Holy Spirit in connection with the Active Powers of the Mind. Repentance is the struggle for spiritual life; Faith lays hold on that life; and Conversion is the consciousness of that life.

There is nothing mystical, nothing beyond the natural laws of the mind, about Con-

version, any more than about Repentance and Faith. The phenomena of the spiritual life are as real as those of the natural life ; and to the truly spiritual man its evidence becomes equally valid and distinct. Animal life is perfect as it calls into exercise all the functions of its organism ; intellectual life is perfect as its faculties are fully developed ; and spiritual life is subject to similar laws, and depends upon conditions equally intelligible. In the natural life we are conscious of a world of sense, and in the spiritual life of a world of spirit. The natural man is conscious of sin throwing its currents of corrupt life through every member of the body and faculty of the mind ; the spiritual man is conscious of new life infused throughout every power of his being, causing old things to pass away and all things to become new.

We become allied to the animal, to man, or to God, according to the governing principle of the mind, and whichever gains the ascendancy will be sure to draw the whole man after it. In Conversion we become allied to God ; we assimilate to Him, and He reproduces His own life in the soul. We do not rise to the greatness of our nature by becoming spiritual beings until we are brought into affinity with God, and



He sends forth His Spirit into our hearts, crying Abba, Father. Then we become one with Him in sympathy, in affection, in aim; then our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. His love is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us: and, by dwelling in love, we dwell in God, and God in us.

The material world is a world of influence. Every thing that exists has an influence upon some other thing. The flower breathes out fragrance; the air gives life; the sun illumines and quickens: all nature—showers, rivers, seas, heat and cold, night and day, summer and winter—every element and property of matter has an attractive or repellant, a healthful or an injurious influence upon every other object with which it comes in contact. All the minute investigations into the world of matter, all the discoveries of science, prove the complete dependence of one part of existence upon another, and show that to contravene any of the simplest laws of nature would be to neutralise some of its great forces, and make life to man less perfect. The spiritual world is also a world of influences. The Spirit can be as easily acted upon as the Intellect or the Senses. The higher we ascend in the scale of being the more perfectly all the

Divine adaptations appear to view; and the highest manifestations of Infinite wisdom and benevolence can be seen in the spiritual life. The supernatural to us is only the natural to God. Every truly spiritual man is as conscious of the perfection of the supernatural life as of the natural life. Whilst the Spirit in man is influenced by the Intellect and the Sense, he is equally conscious of being influenced by the immediate operations of the Holy Spirit in connection with Divine Truth, acting upon his Intelligence and Sensibility, and spiritualizing his whole nature.

“There’s not the smallest orb that thou behold’st
But in its motion like an angel sings,
Still choiring to the young-eyed cherubim ;
But, while this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close us in, we cannot hear it.”

But, as the natural life is constantly forming itself from the outward world, and is the germ absorbing all congenial elements into itself, so the spirit becomes a complete microcosm, attracting to itself all the light, life, and forces of the spiritual world, until it becomes in itself a complete world of spirit. *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing*

into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

The mind awakes to all the glories of the spiritual world in which God Himself, who is a Spiritual Being, is to the spiritual eye consciously revealed. Not only can the eyes which were blind see men as trees walking, but also *the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*. The ear is thrilled with spiritual music; the heart throbs with spiritual life; the Intellect unveils spiritual wonders; the imagination mounts on spiritual wings; spiritual worlds come within the range of the spiritual vision; and immortal hopes animate the spiritual breast. *For He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given to us the earnest of the Spirit.*

There has been great confusion in reference to Conversion, because a great deal that has been supposed essential to it has no necessary connection with it. It is generally represented as a phenomenon of the Sensibility. The philosophy of Locke has been generally followed, which taught that man possessed only Understanding and Will—including in the Will the emotions and desires—and, consequently, the

test of Conversion has not been the spiritual consciousness as manifested in our active nature, but in the passive sensibilities. Hence some type of feeling, apart from its active relations, has been considered the proper test of the Divine Life. Hence many naturally differing from this type have found, in spite of their most sincere desires and efforts, that it is impossible to them, and have sunk into the depths of despair.

In beginning with our lower, and rising to our higher, nature, God necessarily appeals to our self-love. The Fallen Conscience is in that state in which He can awaken it at first only through hope and fear. The hope of heaven and the fear of hell must ever constitute a powerful element in the first dawn of the spiritual light. In all the progressive stages of life, we must begin with what *is*, and not with what is *not*. But, whilst Conscience, in its first impulses, is susceptible of nothing higher than these influences, they are only the preparation for real Conversion. This Divine change only begins where these end. *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear.* There is, however, a great difference in different individuals. The effects of Conversion come to us

like the sun upon the earth: sometimes it shines amidst clouds; at other times there is a clear sky: in some persons there is winter coldness, in others summer heat; some are stormy, others are calm; in some the fogs are so dense that only a glimmer of light can be seen; in others it is like the vernal morning, balmy, pure, serene. But, as in nature the darkest day has really a sun of light, so in Conversion, there may be still great obscurity; but the least that God does is to *lift upon the spirit the light of His countenance*, and cheer it with a sense of His favour.

The evidence of the reality of Conversion cannot be found in subjective peculiarities—whether they exhibit the greater predominance of the Intellect, the Sensibility, or the Will—but in the reproduction within us of *the love of God in Christ Jesus*. It is easy to *bear the NAME of Christ*; but, *if any man have not the SPIRIT of Christ*, he is none of His. Life is equally real amidst all the varieties of human nature—in every country, every age, every degree of civilization—in all its essential features it is the same. We must guard against the delusion that the Divine Life is always strongest when there is the strongest emotion. There is often

the greatest strength of character when there is the greatest calmness. Conversion simply changes us towards God. It unites the weakness of the weak with the strength of God: it casts all its impurity upon the purity of God, all its imperfection upon the perfection of God, and exclaims, *I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*: and, although there is communicated a New Life, which in its principle is everywhere the same, yet its operation destroys none of the peculiarities of human nature.

Rapture and ecstasy are the inferior forms of Conversion, proving that the harmony is not complete between the Intellect, the Sensibility, and the Will. Great excitement of feelings, instead of contributing to the formation of the Christian character, often deranges it, destroys its intensity, and hinders its advancement. Too much excitement upon the mind acts like excessive stimulants upon the body, disturbing its functions and neutralizing its power. There are many impulsive natures, easily moved to great excitement; but it should never be sought after, nor regarded as a high attainment in the Spiritual life:

“ For Nature, only loud when she destroys,
Is silent when she fashions. She will crowd

The work of her destruction, transient, loud,
Into an hour, and then long peace enjoys.
Yea, every power that fashions and upholds
Works silently. All things whose life is sure,
Their life is calm."

There are so many feelings in human nature which resemble true religion—just as there are many perfect-looking coins that are counterfeit—that, without a proper analysis of our real state by the standard of Divine Truth, we may be greatly deceived. We can, however, easily test the genuineness of our Conversion by our conscious affections. The body has its world, and seeks its pleasure in satisfying its appetites and passions ; the soul has its world, and finds its satisfaction in the cultivation of the Intellect and the Sensibility ; and the regenerated Spirit has also its world, and delights itself in the Lord—in thinking as He thinks ; in feeling as He feels ; in acting as He acts. Its world is pure benevolence—the intrinsic good—and its only aim is to bring all its powers into harmony with this Divine principle. This is the loftiest ideal of all excellence ; this is the essence of all true religion ; this resembles *Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us* ; this includes all that the world requires to make it perfectly happy ; all

that is greatest in time and in eternity ; and, as the mind becomes strengthened in this excellence, it becomes more perfect in the Spiritual Life.

SECTION III.

CONVERSION IN RELATION TO THE HUMAN WILL.

It can be easily seen, from the nature of Conversion, that it involves a more perfect exercise of the Human Will. It seems a strange anomaly that those who contend so earnestly for a scheme of Necessity in Conversion imagine that they are contending for the honour and glory of God. The great Father of Humanity would scarcely feel Himself exalted by His children, were they to refuse to do their duty that He might have the honour of doing everything for them. It does, certainly, seem a strange way of proving the goodness of God, in the conversion of the world, to shut us up to the conclusion that, if He were sufficiently good, all would be saved, seeing that the conversion of all men is within His absolute power. Is there any need for this confusion in a subject so infinitely high and holy? Have we not seen that there is an incalculably greater display of

Divine benevolence in connection with human freedom than in the most perfect scheme of Necessity. We are not indifferent to the glory of God when we contend for the exercise of Human Power. Our object is to exhibit it fully to view, without those dark clouds which the doctrine of Necessity must throw around it, and to present the Divine justice unsullied, when we contemplate the melancholy fact that nearly *the whole world lieth in wickedness*.

It seems to be a universal law that everything depends upon some agency greater than itself. Nothing but God can be self-existing. Man cannot rise above himself without some Power greater than himself. We affirm as positively as any Necessitarian that Conversion is the work solely of the Divine Spirit; but this does not in any way contradict the assertion that the Spirit works only in accordance with Moral Agency. God rules matter by force, instinct by control; but He governs mind by moral law. He never applies the laws of Necessity to a moral being, any more than He applies moral power to physical laws. The one would be as incongruous as the other. Man is conscious that Conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit; he is equally conscious that in it he has

been perfectly free, and that no faculty of the mind has been superseded by Divine Grace. The Spirit reproduces a state which is our normal condition ; we having, through the effects of sin, sunk into an abnormal state. It is not with any law of man's nature that the Spirit interferes, but with the effects of depravity, and the derangement which it has caused.

Man could not have lost the power of freedom, amidst the ruins of the Fall, without ceasing to be responsible for his Conversion. CONVERSION MUST BE AS REALLY MAN'S OWN ACT AS THE ACT WHICH CAUSED THE NEED OF IT. We dishonour God and throw a stumbling-block in the way of the unconverted, when, in order to prop up some feeble creed, we wrest the simple interpretation of God's Holy Word. To suppose that God could demand of man what he could not render, or punish him for the neglect of duty which he never had the power to perform, would be to suppose Him a tyrant, and not the loving God.

If God could *necessitate* man, He could make him *free*. It does not require a greater power to create a perfectly self-determining being than to pre-determine every action of the universe. God *does* profess to have made man free, and all the action of His government is based upon

this principle; and, surely, there could be nothing so derogatory to God as to suppose Him capable of withholding from man the necessary conditions of his freedom. This thought would rise to the height of absurdity and monstrosity if, as the Necessitarian holds, the motive by which He is actuated is the fear that it would detract from His own glory and greatness. The Necessitarian forces us to the conclusion that God does intrust man with the power to do evil; He does allow the universe to be disturbed by the terrible consequences of sin; nor has man any power by which he can recover himself from his lost condition: He will not give the necessitating power to prevent the abounding wickedness—for *sin abounds*; He does not necessitate man's regeneration—for the world is unregenerate; and He would regard it as a reflection upon His own honour to give any power, even in connection with the great plan of Redemption, by which man could escape from his perilous condition! What room there is left in such a system for Moral Government, or for future rewards and punishments, we cannot tell.

The chief cause of confusion in this subject springs not so much from the nature of Human

Power as its extent. We look at the greatness of the change which takes place in Conversion, and instinctively exclaim, *Who is sufficient for this work, but God?* and it seems impious to ascribe it to any other power. Hence many conclude that it is removed altogether from the sphere of human agency, and that they must wait until some power irresistibly transforms them. But there is not a single intimation in the Bible that man has to wait for such a power: on the contrary, the Bible is one grand appeal to a power which the Divine Spirit has already created, and for the exercise of which man is held responsible. If there be a single moment in the life of any man in which he cannot be saved, then he cannot be responsible for being saved in that moment. The law must be absolute, in all righteous government—THAT OUR SENSE OF OBLIGATION IS LIMITED TO OUR ABILITY.

Now what is this power that we are called upon to exercise as the condition of the Spirit's power in Conversion? Not, of course, any Divine power—that would be impossible in a human being—but simply to exercise the power that is natural to us as moral agents. Let any man ask himself what he can do as a sinner in the sight of God and he will find that

he can do just what Conversion requires. The Condition of Conversion is nothing else than the action of the Will choosing the Truth as it is in Jesus, when it is duly influenced by the truth. And this is the germ from which the Spirit works our Regeneration ; this will bring the Conscience completely within the influence of the Divine light and power ; and this requires only the natural exercise of the mind.

We are as conscious of originating our choices as we are of the choices themselves. Whilst we are sensible of various causes operating around us, influencing our perceptions, judgments, and convictions, we are also conscious of a self-determining power in the mind, greater than all its motives. The only law that can be binding upon man is the law that can be obeyed by the natural exercises of the mind. It is not, as Hamilton and others have supposed, that there must be a certain balance of motive either in the object presented to the Will or in the Will itself ; but all the motives brought to bear upon the Will are but so many conditions in the mind's exercises which it has power to control. The moment any motive should necessitate the Will, it would not only cease to be responsible, but cease to be Will at all.

Let us suppose that there are several alternatives before the sincere inquirer after truth. He has before him the Bible, and some Heathen oracle ; some work of fiction, and some treatise on true religion ; some one known in the ways of vice, and some one distinguished for virtue ; some place of amusement, and the house of God. Here are conflicting motives ; and it may be wrong to say that the mind, under all circumstances, has sufficient motive for choosing the right. All its habits may be under the dominion of wrong ; but is there not sufficient power in the mind to weigh the motives, to *prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good* ? The Reason has well been called the truth-faculty ; and such is its adaptation to the truth that, when it finds it, it must approve of it. A man may *love darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil ; he may refuse to come to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd* ; but the good is as much within his power as the evil. The Will is the controlling conscious Self, or self in the act of willing. The dispositions, the natural tendencies, the intellectual attainments, the emotional susceptibilities and desires, all combine to furnish motives to action, and the strength which each has acquired

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influences the probability of the action ; but at any time, when the proper conditions are supplied, man can change the whole current of his action.

The Will is the seat of action, created by God to exercise a primary power, and is the type of all primordial power. The causal condition in the mind is its power of volition within the range of possibility ; and whatever is impossible to man forms no object for the determination of the Will. All laws, Human and Divine, are constituted upon the principle that what is within man's power may be chosen by him, and we can only intelligently choose what we believe to be possible.

Now these principles are easily applied to the Divine Life. The initial stages of Conversion are possible to man, because grace underlies our probationary freedom, so perfectly as to call into perfect exercise all the powers of the mind, and is so adapted to the natural operations of the mind, that, when they are concentrated upon the operations of grace, grace transforms nature into itself, so that, whilst the mind is under the most perfect influence of grace, it is equally conscious of the exercise of all its natural faculties. Thus, we are not contending so much for Human

as Divine Power. No one can deny the natural power of the mind, apart from Divine Grace. What we want to be convinced of is the fact that Redemption is complete, so complete that man has only to put forth his natural power, in reference to it, in order to realize its fulness ; and that, although Human Power in the Divine Life is so small, it is great enough to embrace the perfection of that life.

Man has power to change his ultimate intention in reference to God as well as to man ; and this power constitutes the condition upon which the Spirit regenerates the whole nature. This new choice of the conditions of conversion is to the character what the magnetic force is to the needle. It is the power that adjusts all its aims and works, and practically determines the life of the whole man. It is called a new life, bringing the Intellect, the Sensibility, and the Will, into perfect harmony with the life of God. Instead of self-gratification controlling the mind, love to God and man becomes its germinant principle, subduing all things to itself, and producing the fruit of the Spirit.

SECTION IV.

*CONVERSION IN RELATION TO THE
FUTURE LIFE.*

The Divine Teacher so frequently referred to Conversion, as the necessary qualification for heaven, that it may give completeness to this chapter briefly to notice its connection.

We are permitted, by the light of Conversion, to analyse the principles of our immortality. The New Birth is the beginning of our Eternal Life. In Regeneration man is born from above, and is, consequently, fitted for the heavenly world. Heaven is to be the consummation of our spiritual life, and the *renewal of the Spirit* in man is to be the beginning of that life. *Christ in the heart the hope of Glory* is that which *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered the heart of man to conceive, but which God hath revealed by His Spirit.* In the degree in which the spiritual life becomes more perfect it becomes more heavenly. The spiritual man *comes unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of*

all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. The body and soul, as they are subject to the spirit, become the temple of the Holy Ghost, and prepared for the resurrection to eternal life. Christ is the Great Archetype of all spiritual life on earth and in heaven, and, as we assimilate to Him, so we shall awake with His likeness. *We shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is.*

It was no arbitrary law, uttered by the Saviour, when He said to Nicodemus : *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* There is no affinity in the unrenewed mind, either with the spirit or the employments of heaven. It is dead to all that constitutes heavenly life, and rejects all that can bring it under heavenly influence. *The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.* As far as we can trace the mind beyond the grave, it would seem that the regenerated life is to constitute the principle of its eternal progress and happiness. The mind, having become an eternal spring of spiritual life, becomes an eternal source of spiritual happiness.

On the other hand, the Conscience in the sinner becomes the worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched. It becomes dead

to all the realities of spiritual life, but conscious of all the miseries of spiritual death. This state is *the second death*, and is necessarily reserved for the future world, because the present world, even to the worst, is a mixture of good and evil. There may be some rare instances, such as Jude speaks of : *Trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots*. The habit of sin may be so strong that the spirit may find it in vain to strive. Abandoned to vile passion, a man might exclaim,

“Where’er I turn my eyes is hell ; myself am hell.”

But, whilst this is seldom the case in the present world, it will be the perpetual condition of the unconverted in the next world. What will be the positive punishment inflicted upon the wicked in the future world is not clearly revealed. But *whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*. *He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption*. All gracious influences will have ceased, and all that will remain of the spirit in man will be dead to good and alive to evil. We, at the present time, see that all the tendencies of sin are *earthly, sensual, devilish* ; and this tendency will be complete in the world of the lost. The condemned sinner

will experience, not only the death of Adam, but also the terrible consequences of the life despised that was purchased by Christ. He is left, not only to all the consequences of the deeds done in the body, without any of the gratifications of sense or the ameliorating influences which must necessarily exist in a world of grace; but is also tormented with the thought that he might have been *renewed in the spirit of his mind*, and have sung the triumphs of Redeeming Grace for ever.

The carnal mind has no meetness for the kingdom of heaven. This is not a question of morality, but of spirituality. There may be much in the natural man that is true, and beautiful, and good; but it *knoweth not the things of God, they being spiritually discerned*. Could the unconverted man enter heaven, he could find no happiness there. No law is more rigid than the law of human sympathy. We can find but little happiness with those with whom we have no affinity. This is more especially the case as we ascend in the Divine Life. The higher we rise in thought and purity, the more difficult it is to hold fellowship with those whose tastes are low and impure. *There is no communion between light and darkness*, even in the present world.

Then what would be the misery of a sinful spirit in the conscious presence of the infinitely Holy God.

The full force of this law is not seen in the present world. Men have much in common, apart from the spiritual life. Where the spiritual life is weak, and there is great natural excellence, there may be strong sympathy apart from the holy life. When the carnal and the spiritual can find much fellowship, it is no proof of great Christian excellence, but, on the contrary, that the natural and not the spiritual predominates. But in heaven all is spiritual. Both the body and soul become spiritual. *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. We shall be like Christ; for we shall see Him as He is.* Heaven is heaven, not because of its music and song, but because the spirit is attuned to heavenly harmony. Heaven is heaven, not because God, the angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, are there; but because there is perfect communion and affinity with their holiness and love. And it is Conversion alone that can produce the life of heaven and heavenly sympathy. This is the least of God's requirements, and the smallest possible qualification for the heavenly society.

In conclusion, we would urge attention to this subject upon the unconverted, seeing that without holiness no man can see the Lord. We would also guard against the errors of Pelagianism and Rationalism, of Formalism and Mysticism. No natural discipline, no development of the moral or intellectual faculties, no Ritualism or dreamy superstition, can produce the heavenly character. It is only as the New Birth restores the Divine image, that the spirit can awake in God's likeness, and see Him as He is, and shine in the brightness of the everlasting light. At the same time, whilst Conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit, its conditions are all within the range of human power. We must ever remember that the great object of Redemption, and the work of the Holy Spirit, is not to supersede our natural power ; but to bring our fallen condition within the possibility of human freedom. In connection with the work of the Spirit, we see, not nature independent of grace, but grace calling into activity all the natural faculties towards God. We have nothing to do with the question, What would have been the state of the world without Redemption, or the work of the Holy Spirit ? but what we can do in reliance upon Redeeming

Power. We require no other power to fulfil all the Divine conditions, than we already possess. If the sinner will only trust himself to the Person of Christ, and grasp the Atoning work of Christ, he will find the Divine help so complete, that God will say to him, *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* Whoever is found at last unsaved will be without excuse, because God places before men *life and death, blessing and cursing*, and gives every man the power *to choose life.* All who are excluded from heaven will be shut out, not because God's grace is not sufficient for them, but because they have not put forth the power which they already possess in order to realize the Divine life.

“Saviour ! though my rebellious will
Has been by Thy blessed power renewed,
Yet in its secret workings still
How much remains to be subdued !”—*Charlotte Elliott.*

“Abide in me ! There have been moments pure
When I have seen Thy face, and felt Thy power ;
Then evil lost its grasp, and passion, hushed,
Owned the Divine enchantment of the hour.
These were but seasons—beautiful and rare ;
Abide in me ! and they shall ever be.
I pray Thee now fulfil my earnest prayer :
Come and abide in me, and I in Thee.”—*H. B. Stowe.*

“ He that will work for others' good
Must be himself renewed :
So, before all things, thou must try
Thyself to purify.”—*Tholuck.*

“Religion, in its *rise*, interests us almost exclusively about ourselves ; in its *progress*, it engages us about the welfare of our fellow-creatures ; in its more advanced stages, it animates us to consult on all things, and to exalt to the utmost of our power the power of God.”—*Rev. C. Simeon.*

“Most of us are but fragments and divorces, the products of some former violence or convulsion ; but such is not he [the new man], but rather a fair planet on which Eden continues. Things to us the most irreconcilable are his sweetest harmonies. He is most wilful when he is doing the will of God. His human reason is most independent when he is the recipient of Divine Revelation ; his truth and God’s belong all the more severally to each because they are the other’s. The efforts of his genius are his obedience to a Divine commission. . . . Whatever he thinks is a thought enriched ; whatever he does is a marriage deed. Thenceforth his doctrines, embodied and illumined, are sights and sounds—things seen and heard.”—*J. J. G. Wilkinson.*

CHAPTER V.

HUMAN POWER IN SANCTIFICATION.

“ And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.”—
1 *Thess.* v. 23, 24.

“ Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”—2 *Cor.* vii. 1.

IN our last chapter we considered Conversion as the commencement of Sanctification. We now propose to consider Sanctification as the great end of Conversion, and as the necessary condition of Christian Perfection. Holiness is the great design of the universe, and forms a necessary part of God's moral government ; and Sanctification represents the holiness of the saint in connection with the sacrifice of Christ, as distinguished from holiness as an abstract principle. The world were without a purpose but for the consideration of God's Infinite Holiness. Man attains to nothing really great until he becomes holy as God is holy, and rises to fellowship with Him.

Every thing in nature has its individual principle; and the greatest principle in the government of man must be his highest capability. Holiness is the highest possible attainment of the human mind, and should, therefore, be sought after for its own sake : it is the intrinsic good, and should therefore be the ultimate aim of every action. Holiness was the chief distinction "in the first man, *Who after God was created in righteousness and in true holiness.* When man fell from that state, the gift of Christ was not considered too great a sacrifice, to restore him to its possession.


SECTION I.

SANCTIFICATION IN RELATION TO CONVERSION.

The word sanctify is derived from the Latin *sanctus*, holy, and *facere*, to make—to make holy. The Greek word (ἁγιάζω) and the Hebrew word (קדש) express the same meaning. It is employed in two distinct senses. The first is to make clean physically or morally ; the second is to set apart from a common to a sacred use. Holiness, as it exists in God, is infinite moral Purity ; as it relates to man, it is a purity resembling God's, but limited by the conditions

of a finite, sinful nature. Our Lord, in praying for His disciples, said : *Sanctify them through Thy truth : Thy word is truth ;* and the apostle Paul prayed for the Thessalonians, *that the very God of peace might sanctify them wholly* (ὁλοτελείς). The word is used for completeness in every part. It means being consecrated, devoted, not only outwardly, but inwardly, as far as there is a possibility in the person or thing. Thus *God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.* In like manner, the Temple and its sacrifices, the priesthood and its robes, and the vessels of the ministry, all were sanctified to God. Hence, although the Sabbath is *per se* the same as any other day, the materials of the Temple the same as any other materials, and the tribe of Levi as human as any other tribe, yet, by being thus consecrated, they became as distinguished as if they had never been common or unclean.

The same idea is retained in the translation of the Hebrew word into the Greek of the New Testament ; but a more spiritual signification is given to it. St. Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, retains the figures which refer to the ceremonial of the past. He says : *Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that*



*are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.*¹ Speaking of the change that had taken place in them, as distinguished from what they were, he says : *And such were some of you : but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God.*² From these passages we see clearly that all the types and symbols of the past had a deep spiritual meaning, which is realized in the believer in Jesus. There is the same visible sanctification that existed under the Law. Hence, Paul says again : *I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*³ *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*⁴

A very high degree of Sanctification, no doubt, was obtained under the Old Economy ; but the superiority of the New is sufficient to constitute it a distinct dispensation. John the Baptist was greater than any of his predecessors—

¹ 1 Cor. i. 2. ² 1 Cor. vi. 11. ³ Rom. xii. 1. ⁴ Gal. vi. 15.

including Patriarchs, Kings, and Prophets—but *the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he.*¹ The principle of holiness is the same under both Testaments ; but the Old is intended to be only symbolical of the New Testament, in which, through the efficacy of the Atonement of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit, there is not merely the *circumcision of the flesh, but the circumcision of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter.*² It is our privilege to be sanctified, not only outwardly but inwardly—the Intellect, the Sensibility, the Will, purified from sin, and consecrated to Holiness. *For, if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh : how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.*³ The Holiness of the Old Economy had no glory in this respect, by reason of the *Glory that excelleth.*⁴ This superior excellence consists in the Holy Spirit's influence in our hearts, communicating His life to our spiritual

¹ Luke vii. 28.² Rom. ii. 28, 29.³ Heb. ix. 13, 14.⁴ 2 Cor. iii. 10.

nature, washing and renewing us, and making us complete in Christ Jesus.

It is clear that there are different degrees of holiness to be obtained, according to the nature and circumstances of the seeker. We have seen that the term holy is applied to the office of the priesthood, to material objects, to God, to angels, and to men. Holiness in an unconscious vessel cannot be the same as holiness in a moral agent, and holiness in man must come infinitely short of holiness in God. What would be holiness in a Jew would be comparative unholiness in a Christian; what would be perfection in a child would be imperfection in a man; and the standard of earth cannot be the standard of heaven: but all are only varieties of the same great principle. In its lowest form, it is the Conscience under the control of righteous law; in its higher manifestations, it is the Conscience under the influence of Perfect Love: thus becoming a spring of purity, governing every thought and action of the mind.

It is a truth which Experience as well as Revelation discovers to us, that a man is not entirely sanctified when he is regenerated. All who have been conscious of this latter change have been equally conscious that it is but the

commencement of the higher Christian life. Every spiritual act must be in accordance with the laws of moral agency; and Sanctification arises out of the progressive law which is natural to an intelligent moral being. We progress as the governing principle of our mind conquers every element that is antagonistic to it: consequently, every faculty of the mind must be brought into subjection to the principle of Holiness. Thus Sanctification consists in the *inversion of our sinful moral nature*. Sin had been so completely the governing principle of the mind, that the habit of the sinful life had become fixed. The Conscience had become *seared as with a hot iron*.¹ *The mind and Conscience were defiled*.² *Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil*.³ In Conversion there is a complete change. Not only is man *justified freely from all things by the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus*, so that he can say: *O Lord, I will praise Thee, though Thou wast angry with me: Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me*; but he can say also: *The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death*. He

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 2. ² Titus i. 15. ³ John iii. 19.

is not free from the effects of sin as an evil habit. Neither Justification nor Regeneration can *perfect holiness*; but in Sanctification, by an upward process, on the same principle as the downward tendency to sin, the holy habit becomes formed: not necessarily in the same ratio of progress, but according to the same moral law.

We are all conscious of uniformities of action, which grow upon us by repetition. They are often performed with so little thought as to acquire a resemblance to instinct, arising from the same recurring motives, brought up by the laws of intellectual association, by time, place, and various objects of causation. Thus, we commonly say that "habit is second nature;" but the action is not less responsible because it springs from habit. Habit, unlike instinct, is subject to the control of the Will. It is unconscious volition; and the same principle which is at work in the formation of the habits of daily life is equally operative in the Divine life. Every sincere and earnest prayer we offer to God; every *cup of cold water we give in the name of Christ*; every effort we put forth to conquer sin; every exercise of trust in Christ, leaves a residuum in the mind, imparting to it a tendency commensurable

with the frequency with which such action has been repeated; the consequent strength of our mental and spiritual power becoming equal to the degree of concentration upon the mental or spiritual object.

When the mind has been regenerated by the quickening power of God, it becomes habitually subject to His holy influence. It is *rooted and grounded in love*; so that a holy character must necessarily follow. There will be a keen sensibility of sin, an intense self-loathing in the sight of God, not so much from the fear of the consequences of sin, as a perfect hatred of its exceeding sinfulness. *Oh, ye that love the Lord, see that ye hate the thing that is evil.* Here the two tendencies are linked together—the love of God and the hatred of sin. There can be no true conversion to God without the loving all He loves and hating all He hates: and, as this principle operates, Sanctification must necessarily follow. There may, in different individuals, be much or little insight into the Plan of Salvation, as such; there will be a great variety in the experience of the change itself: in some, it may be but little beyond the mere Intuition of the work of the Holy Spirit, without its Logical Forms; in others, its phenomena may be more

Intellectual, Emotional, or Moral, according to the subjective tendency of the individual; but this uniform tendency will everywhere be manifest—the strengthening of the good, and the weakening of the evil tendency.

Everything that affects the Holy life is necessarily positive. We can only be separate from sin by the attainment of holiness; and the principles of holiness cannot operate upon our nature, without neutralising the influence of sin. We chase away darkness by giving light; we destroy disease by giving health; we remove weakness by imparting strength: and this is the process of Sanctification. Most of our sins are the result of either ignorance in the mind or of deadness in the Conscience. We can only remove ignorance by the infusion of Divine knowledge, and we can only quicken the Conscience by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the process of Sanctification, the killing and the quickening power become perfect.

We do not so easily recognise the processes of our spiritual as of our intellectual nature, because its laws are more occult, and there are fewer illustrations of the former than of the latter. In the cultivated Intellect, or the refined Sensibility, there is much more to attract atten-

tion than in the self-abnegation required by Sanctification.

A considerable part of the New Testament was written to promote the Entire Sanctification of the Churches. The Epistles were sent to those who had been Converted, but not SANCTIFIED WHOLLY. Those who composed the Early Christian Church were certainly true Christians; but, from the circumstances in which they embraced Christianity, many of them could not have been more than *babes in Christ*. Three thousand were converted on the day of Pentecost, and five thousand immediately afterwards. These were from every part of the Roman empire; and they returned to their native places, and founded Christian Churches. They had received the Holy Ghost; but their ignorance, prejudice, and love of Jewish forms, still clung to them, and could only be removed by their progress in the knowledge of Divine Truth. The uniform action of the Will, in relation to the length and breadth of Redeeming Love, can only be secured by a clear understanding of the work of Christ, and a character formed in accordance with the purposes of Christ.


We have frequently heard the question asked,

with a kind of reflection upon the Divine Goodness : " Will God partly cleanse a soul ? Does a new creature mean only partly new ? Is it likely that God, whose wisdom and goodness are Infinite, will do a thing imperfectly ? " But what is the meaning of these terms ? The same question would equally apply to everything that God has created. Abstractedly, we should suppose that the Creator would aim at the highest possible perfection at once ; but it is no necessary part of the perfection of any object that it should reach the ultimate ideal of its perfection at once. There is *a priori* reason for believing that every part of God's work becomes ultimately as complete as its nature and relations will admit ; but is it not the grandest law of creation that God's works are progressive ? Is it not a sufficient proof of this that God, to whom so many plans were possible, has chosen the law of progress as the uniform law of Nature ? No doubt, it seems unreasonable to many energetic minds, whose only notion of perfection is *speed*, that God should have taken a season to produce flowers and fruits, or a century to perfect a tree, or thirty years to mature a man, or myriads of ages to make our world a fit habitation for man. God,

however, has chosen the law of progress as the law of His action, both in Nature and in Grace.

But is there not a beauty and a grandeur in the progressive law of Nature which never could belong to more fixed modes of existence? Do we not admire the bud as well as the flower? Is there not an attraction in childhood which cannot be seen in manhood? We are far from wishing that men should come into being as Adam first came: and, in relation to the Divine Life, we have no difficulty in understanding, in its progressive character, the Divine wisdom and goodness. This principle is not only necessary in the formation of moral character; but it presents a variety and beauty such as could never be found in the grandest absolute creation.

If the favour of God or our title to heaven depended upon the highest state of perfection, we might question the wisdom of this progressive law; but the *babe in Christ* becomes a member of God's great family, just as much as the *father in Israel*. Christ said of the helpless little ones, *for of such is the kingdom of heaven. If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*. And none are more tenderly dealt with than the helpless little



ones of God's holy family. Just as the weakness and ignorance of the youngest child is no disqualification for being reckoned among the families of earth, so the feeblest child of God may be a denizen of heaven, and may take his place among the great family of God. Of course, the new-born child will only take the position of a child in the heavenly world, just as he does in this: he cannot have the same strength of character as if he had reached maturity.

Regeneration is the only condition of man's admission into heaven. *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* This implies that all who are born again have the necessary qualification for entering there. Christ said to the thief on the cross: *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* But this Divine change simply gives the lowest possible fitness for the heavenly society; our character must determine our rank there. In heaven nothing remains but character. *Our works do follow us*; and, whilst there are thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers, our attainments in holiness alone will fix our place amongst the ranks of the redeemed.

We recognise certain fundamental principles

of Government among us, which must be true throughout the universe. All who come into existence can claim a place in our world ; but we only confer our places of trust upon those whose character qualifies them for filling them. Honour is worthless except as a mark of merit ; and we cannot conceive of any other principle in the kingdom of heaven. *The nearest the eternal throne are said to have come out of great tribulation ; to have washed their robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb.* There will be cherubim and seraphim among the saints as well as among the angels. *There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars : for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.* This principle is in perfect harmony with all our conceptions of God's holiness and justice, and with the eternal laws of moral being.

What remains to be given to the regenerated man is SANCTIFIED CHARACTER. The Divine Life exists as perfectly in principle in its first as its more advanced stages ; but the force of evil habit to some extent still remains. Whilst there is the beginning of the *new life unto righteousness*, there is not the complete death

unto sin. The seed of Divine truth is sown in the heart; but *that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die.* *The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other.* And, just as only the germ of the seed lives, whilst it destroys every element that is opposed to its own life, and, metaphorically speaking, the seed may be said to die, so this principle of Sanctification *throws off the old man with his deeds, and is renewed in knowledge after the image of God.* In Sanctification the Spirit gains the entire ascendancy, and subdues all things to the power and love of Christ.

We cannot speak of spiritual progress, except in an accommodated sense, until we are entirely Sanctified. It is true that the death of the seed is a condition of its growth; the counteraction of disease is a means of the restoration of health; *the death of sin* is the only condition of the *life of righteousness.* Regeneration begins to send currents of spiritual health through all the arteries and cells of our depraved nature, until it is *sanctified wholly.* In the *new creature* in Christ Jesus we discover imperfections unworthy the greatness of Redemption. How little there is in the Intellect, the Emotions, or

the Moral Nature, in harmony with the principle of the spiritual life ! How strong their tendency to follow the inclination rather than to obey the voice of God ! What crowds of rabble memories surround the mind ! What currents of evil thoughts rush through the heart ! What storms of angry passion rage within the soul ! What hosts of evil angels try to storm the citadel of the spirit ! It is true that the Divine Spirit still retains the throne of the heart ; but the spirit of rebellion has not been entirely crushed out.

The Sandwich islander imagined that, when he killed his enemy, the strength of the enemy went into himself. There is something analogous to this in relation to the Divine Life. The strength of virtue required to conquer any vice gives that additional strength of character. In some vices we destroy some principle of sin, which is like crushing the head of some terrible Medusa which has been poisoning or deadening every part of our nature. Every breath of Divine inspiration, every ray of Divine light, every infusion of Divine life, into the spirit, tends to strengthen the habit of Holiness and to weaken the habit of sin. If, *as sin did abound, grace doth much more abound*, it neces-

sarily follows, should the ratio of progress be no greater than the progress of sin, that man may be *sanctified wholly*; but, seeing that *grace much more abounds*, it would seem to be the great privilege of every saint to obtain this great blessing. Such are the marvellous capabilities of the human mind, in its progressive tendencies, especially when exercising Faith in Christ, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in connection with the teachings of Divine Truth, such is the momentum that may be gained by every step of advancement, that the surprise is, not that any Christian may be sanctified wholly, but that so few should fulfil conditions so easy, or realize that grace which is so abounding. If the same means were continued by which we obtained Conversion—the same humility before God, the same sorrow for sin, the same trust in the Atonement of Christ, the same consecration to God, the same intense earnestness,—then we should soon receive the same clear consciousness of Sanctification as we received of Conversion.

The first stage of Sanctification is the simple idea of ourselves as sinners, conscious of Salvation through the sacrifice of Christ. In many instances, the primary motive of Conversion is

nothing higher than the dread of the consequences of sin, and the fear of losing heaven ; but in Sanctification the Spirit in man rises into distinctness and power, the very essence of which is the intrinsic good, or pure love to God and man, until we could almost wish, with St. Theresa, that there was neither heaven nor hell, that we might serve God for what He is in Himself alone. In Sanctification we discover the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the intrinsic beauty of Holiness. Instead of a servile fear, there is the deep agonizing of the spirit to be free from that which is in itself so hateful, and so abhorrent to God ; and, when this principle gains the entire ascendancy, we realize entire Sanctification.

Thus, Sanctification is concerned with man as a sinner rather than with the development of his faculties in connection with the great purposes of God : this latter belongs to Christian Perfection. The man who is truly conscious of the Spiritual life, if he continue in that state of mind by which he obtained that life, and not, as too many do, think that his work is done because he is a child of God, will be so concerned about his Entire Holiness that he will think but little about many of the speculative

questions which may have formerly perplexed him. As the patient that has discovered within himself some deadly disease, and found some infallible physician, will trouble himself much less about the science of medicine than about the application, *there and then*, of what has done so much good already to his own particular case : so the converted man, having felt the efficacy of the blood of Christ, will be most anxious to trust it until it *cleanses from all sin*. There can be but little hunger and thirst after righteousness when the mind is more concerned about the hidden things of God than about the means by which we can reflect the image of God. One of the great temptations to the child of God, especially at the earlier stages of the Christian life, is to divert his attention from the completion of his salvation by perplexing him with the mysteries of the Divine Government, or *strifes about words*, or *science falsely so called*, when *purity of heart, singleness of eye, sanctification of spirit, soul, and body*, would so clear the mental and spiritual vision, and raise him to that altitude from which all that is necessary for him to know of God's plans would appear clearly to his view.

Nothing can be more clear and definite, in

relation to Sanctification, than the prayer of the Apostle Paul for the Thessalonians, that they might not only be sanctified wholly, but that *their whole spirit and soul and body might be preserved blameless until the coming of Christ.* The inspired apostle could never have offered such a prayer if its answer were impossible. Nothing can be more complete than the change here contemplated. The Spirit—that which is capable of reflecting the Divine image—consecrated wholly to the purity and benevolence of the Deity ; the soul—with its vast powers of thought, its immense susceptibility of emotion—centring alone in God and in the purposes of Redemption ; the body—with its appetites and passions—so purified as to become the temple of the Holy Ghost ; and all the Active Powers so subject to the will of God as to preserve the whole nature blameless, *until mortality shall be swallowed up of life*, in that pure world where *nothing that defileth can enter.*

Much of the prevalent confusion in reference to Sanctification arises from the mystical elements which are supposed to belong to it. It has been removed from the clear regions of common sense into the dark regions of dreamy imagination. A state of feeling has been con-

templated apart from the proper exercise of the faculties of the mind, overlooking the great fundamental law of the mind—that its highest state must always be its most perfect harmony in its thought, feeling, and volition. The mischief has been all the greater because many who have carried with them the greatest odour of sanctity have been the greatest mystics, and we have been attracted by what is false in their character rather than by what is true. In minds very refined and sensitive—minds in which what is called the religious element is supposed to predominate—there is, no doubt, a natural tendency to mysticism ; and, like every passion which grows upon what it feeds, being accustomed to substitute the excitement of the sensibility, or the dreams of the imagination, for the inspirations of God, it soon begins to despise altogether the clearest reasonings, and the plainest teachings of Divine Truth : it claims to be guided by its Intuitions, without any regard to their proper functions as regulative principles and spontaneous convictions, in relation to God and Divine Truth.

Moreover, Sanctification has been greatly misunderstood, because many, instead of applying the term to man in his present state, apply

it to Adam before he fell, to the angels who have never sinned, or even to God Himself. In a subject so great in itself, when once we cross the boundary of possibility, it is difficult to stop short of fanaticism or despair. Sanctification is simply what is possible to every individual sinner before God. To many it is a dream of ecstasy, of freedom from temptation, or of immunity from error : consequently, amidst the sorrows and conflicts of life, those who most desire it most despair of ever attaining it. A more accurate acquaintance with the laws of the human mind would teach us that human nature could not sustain incessant rapture ; a clearer knowledge of the Divine Government would convince us that to destroy temptation would be to destroy the possibility of Holiness ; and to have perfect knowledge would make us equal to God Himself. The desire for greatly excited religious feeling often arises from motives altogether opposed to the principles of real Holiness, and is generally a form of selfishness. A morbid craving for happiness, and an intense longing to be freed from the cares and conflicts of life, is not the ideal of Christian attainment. Reason, as well as the Bible, teaches that eternity is long enough to enjoy

the bliss of heaven, and that Christ expects us to *suffer with Him here, that we may be glorified with Him hereafter.*

“Heaven’s favours here are trials, not rewards ;
A call to duty, not discharge from care.”

And he only has reached the greatness of this subject who is willing to forego any amount of happiness for the attainment of Holiness, and whose watchword is *God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Thus Sanctification is no great mystery to those who have experienced it; neither is it removed away from the laws of human thought. Its highest attainment is only the complete elevation of human consciousness into the purity and love of God; the natural consequence of which will be the complete ascendancy of the spiritual over the carnal mind. This cannot be a greater mystery than any other state of consciousness to those who have attained to it; and to those who have not experienced it, it is of but little importance, as compared with a practical knowledge of the conditions by which it may be realized.

We will conclude this section by answering a question which has been often asked : Is Sancti-

fication gradual or instantaneous? It would seem from the principles which we have previously laid down, that it is necessarily gradual. This seems to be involved in the very idea of it. Although the original germ is Divinely imparted, it is a character formed out of a life—a habit growing from a course of free action—therefore we must reach it by progressive stages; but, metaphysically speaking, it must be also instantaneous: there must be a point when the carnal ceases to operate, and when the spiritual gains the complete ascendancy. Sanctification is the death of sin; and, however slow that death may be, there must be a moment when that death takes place. Its mode of accomplishment differs, like all life, in different individuals, according to temperament, education, and light; but, in most instances, this great work of Grace is consummated by some special manifestation of Divine love and power. The moment we begin to mortify the deeds of the body, we begin the process of Sanctification; but, as soon as we fully understand the principle of evil working within us, and the sufficiency of the Saviour's Sacrifice; as soon as we hate sin with a perfect hatred, and love God with all the heart; as soon as we trust ourselves wholly to

Christ, we become Sanctified wholly to Him. He is made unto us *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption*; and the same Spirit who bore witness to our Sonship, bears witness also to our Sanctification. Michael Angelo says, in one of his beautiful sonnets, that "the more the marble wastes, the more the statue grows." So, *as the carnal perisheth, the spiritual is renewed day by day*, until some special trial, or affliction, or disappointment of earthly good, or some larger view of Redemption, brings Christ near, as the Sanctifier; and Faith grasps the *abounding grace*, as the full deliverance from the *abounding sin*.

SECTION II.

SANCTIFICATION IN RELATION TO FULL REDEMPTION.

If man cannot be sanctified wholly in this life, it must arise from one of two causes: either that the sacrifice of Christ is insufficient, or that man is unable to comply with the Divine requirement. There are but few who profess to believe in the Atonement of Christ who would attempt to limit its power. It is expressly de-

clared that *the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin*. Not only is this the plain teaching of Scripture, but the idea of it is necessarily involved in the Divinity of Christ. Only an Infinite Saviour can wash away the least stain of Guilt; and there can be no limit to the power of an Infinite Saviour. He who is *the propitiation for the remission of sins that are past* surely can, *through the Eternal Spirit, purge the Conscience from all dead works*. He who can raise the dead Spirit to life can easily perfect that life. Hence, to deny man's Sanctification is to deny him Justification. Both rest upon the same foundation; both are governed by the same laws; and the one necessarily falls with the other. Moreover, to limit the work of Christ must destroy all confidence in Christ; for there could be no certainty as to what sins could, or could not, be purged.

We overlook what is meant by Omnipotence in God. We estimate God's power by our own limited ability. We know that it is so much easier for us to perform a part of a thing than the whole, that we carry the thought into our ideas of God. The very thought of immeasurable existence implies that there must be some Being who is immeasurable; consequently, able

to exercise absolute control over all His creatures. The fact that we can conceive of Infinite Power is a proof of its existence; for it is an intuition in the mind that we can only understand the Infinite by the consciousness of His existence; and He who is Infinite can exercise His power *ad infinitum*. Mind and matter must be the same to Him by whom both mind and matter subsist. It was the voice that rolls the stars along that spake the promises. It is the voice that *spake and it was done, that commanded and it stood fast*; that says, *I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions as a cloud, and as a thick cloud thy sins*. It is the power that *commanded the light to shine out of darkness that shines into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*. It is *the brightness of the Father's Glory, the express image of His Person, the upholder of all things, that purges our sins*.

But whilst there are many who do not deny the power of Christ to *save to the uttermost*, yet they say that man is so depraved that, whilst he can comply with the conditions of pardon, he is unable to rise to the greatness of Sanctification. Now, if any act be within the power of the Will, then certainly man has power to perform it; if it be

not, then it must be within the power of God. In all that relates to the Divine life there are but two moral powers concerned—God and man. Whichever side we take, if we deny the other, we are on the horns of a dilemma. Whatever man cannot do *God can do*. To deny the possibility of Sanctification, because of human weakness, is, *mutatis mutandis*, to limit the power of God. If it can be proved that there is a single condition impossible to man, it only proves that it is not a human, but a Divine condition. *It is God's will, even our Sanctification*; and what we cannot do certainly God can. The conditions of Repentance, Faith, Conversion, and Sanctification, are simply the adaptations of Divine Grace to the weakness of man's depraved nature, in the several stages of the Divine life; and it is the *sine quâ non* of all our obligation to obey, that it is within our power.

Do we not draw the limits of supernatural power narrower than God has drawn them? Is there not some confusion in the mind as to supernatural power glorifying God more than natural power? There is, no doubt, a real distinction between the two, and they should not be confounded; but our power to Will in connection with Divine Grace is supernatural. We

must, however, remember that it is the power to WILL. The great design of Redemption and the work of the Holy Spirit is to make man as free in reference to holiness as he is in reference to sin. In being *sanctified by the Truth*, the Will becomes as free to act in reference to the truth as to error. *If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed:* and Sanctification may be described as a perfect state of spiritual freedom:—the Intellect free from vain *imagination*s, and *high things that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God*; the Affections free from the entanglements of selfish objects; the Conscience free from all *dead works*, and consecrated to Holiness; the Will free from the power of evil inclination, and governed by righteous law. Thus, Divine Grace does not necessitate the mind, but frees it from the bondage of sin, and brings all its faculties into perfect harmony with universal Truth and universal Goodness.

The reason why we are not cleansed from all *filthiness of flesh and spirit* is, we do not CLEANSE OURSELVES. Jesus has *opened the fountain for sin and for all uncleanness*, but we OURSELVES must wash therein. This is a duty which every one must perform for himself. All may not be

able to reach a high degree of knowledge of Divine things ; but all can *perfect Holiness in the fear of God*. All cannot be clothed *in purple and fine linen* ; but all can be *clean* : and the poor and the rich, the ignorant and the intelligent, can alike, by simply trusting Christ, feel that *His blood cleanseth them from all sin*.

Men are not entirely Sanctified, because, either they do not seek it by cleansing themselves from all filthiness in the precious blood of Christ, or they do not, when washed, keep themselves pure. They do not sufficiently trust in the Atonement of Christ, or they do not *come out from among the ungodly*, nor *separate themselves from sinners*. They are constantly *touching, tasting, or handling* something that is unclean. They cannot be right with God, because they are wrong with man. There is much to do in relation to our fellow-men which we OURSELVES alone can do. Honesty, honour, uprightness, are natural virtues, and certainly there can be no spiritual life apart from outward morality ; yet we are exhorted to *cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the spirit*, as well as of the flesh, which the blood of Christ alone can cleanse. Christ provides the elements of purity ; but they will never remove a single stain unless we

apply to them. Strong desires to be clean will never make us clean : it is trusting the Atonement of Christ that can alone sanctify. In Repentance we put away all that can outwardly defile us ; in Regeneration the principle of Holiness is implanted within us ; in Sanctification that principle strengthens and spreads itself throughout the *spirit and soul and body*, until the whole nature becomes *blameless*, and the victory becomes so complete that it can be *preserved blameless until the coming of Christ*. The Regenerate man discovers, in viewing himself in the light of God's Holy Word, that stains of pride, selfishness, and the love of the world, are still upon him ; but he continues to wash and to exercise Faith in the cleansing blood of Christ, until Christ presents him in the glory of His own purity, *without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that he should be holy and without blemish.*

“Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, eternal Word !
From Thee departing, they are lost, and rove
At random, without honour, hope, or peace.
From Thee is all that soothes the life of man,—
His high endeavour and his glad success,
His strength to suffer and His will to serve.”

Cowper.

“And God proclaimed from heaven, and by an oath
Confirmed, that each should answer for himself ;
And, as his own peculiar work should be,
Done by his proper self, should live or die.”

Pollok.

“Our voluntary service He requires,
Not our necessitated. Such with Him
Finds no acceptance, nor can find ; for how
Can hearts, not free, be tried whether they serve
Willing or no, who will but what they must
By destiny, and can no other choose ? ”

Milton.

“Holiness is something of God, wherever it is ; it is an efflux from Him that always hangs upon Him and lives in Him : as the sunbeams, although they gild this lower world, and spread their golden wings over us, yet they are not so much here where they shine, as in the sun from whence they flow.”—*Cudworth*.

“The will doth not incline to have or do that which Reason teacheth to be good, unless the same do also teach it to be possible. For, albeit the appetite, being more general, may wish anything which seemeth good, be it never so impossible ; yet, for such things, the reasonable will of man doth never seek. Let Reason teach impossibility in anything, and the will of man doth let it go : a thing impossible it doth not affect, the impossibility thereof being manifest.”—*Hooker*.

CHAPTER VI.

HUMAN POWER IN CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

“Be ye therefore Perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is Perfect.”—*Matt.* v. 48.

“Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do if God permit.”—*Heb.* vi. 1, 2, 3.

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—*2 Peter* iii. 18.

THE terms used by the Holy Spirit to express Christian Perfection are not the same as those which relate to Sanctification. They are sometimes used synonymously, but generally the former represent a distinct state of the Christian Life, and a higher degree of Christian attainment. Much of the confusion existing in reference to this doctrine arises from the neglect of this distinction. Had there been no class of terms in the Bible expressive of a higher attainment than Sanctification, there certainly would have

existed a state of progress in the Divine Life which had never been recognised by the Holy Spirit ; but nothing can be more clear than the teaching of Scripture on this great truth.

SECTION I.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION AS DISTINGUISHED FROM SANCTIFICATION.

Christian Perfection differs as much from Sanctification as Sanctification differs from Conversion. There is an essential difference between the being *renewed in righteousness* and the being *cleansed from all unrighteousness*, and there is a similar difference between the being *sanctified wholly* and the *going on unto perfection*. The one is spiritual purity, the other is spiritual development. Sanctification is more relative, Christian Perfection more absolute. The day, the temple, the priesthood, the *purifying of the Conscience*, to which we have referred in connection with Sanctification, all relate to that absolute state which is realized in Christian Perfection. The word Perfection (τελειότης) signifies completeness, mature growth. It is the possession of that active principle of holiness of which all the previous exercises of the mind, in relation to the Divine Life, have been but the preparation.

The mind now, being free from sin, is free to expand into all the positive principles of Holiness, which in an eternally progressive nature must include the advancement of the mind into all that is true and beautiful and good, in time and in eternity.

Sanctification is implied in Christian Perfection ; but it refers more to the past, Christian Perfection to the future : the former to our depravity, the latter to our progressive spiritual nature. Sanctification must necessarily be limited, because the effects of sin are limited ; but, if by Divine Grace we conquer sin as completely as sin conquered us, there must of necessity be a period in which *Grace reigns through righteousness*, and sin is completely subdued. But, in Sanctification, we are only restored to that state in which Adam would have been placed had he never sinned. Sanctification is really the starting-point of the Perfect progressive Spiritual Life. Perfection includes Sanctification, as Sanctification includes Conversion, Faith, and Repentance. It includes these, just as the man includes the child, and the book the alphabet.

We can never fully counteract the evil influences of sin in the present world : this forms no

necessary part of either Sanctification or Perfection. Sin must leave behind it infirmities and weaknesses, from the force of evil habit, which must be an eternal loss to the Christian ; and he must ever remain destitute of those accumulated virtues which a complete Life of Godliness would have produced ; but, in Sanctification, sin ceases to be a power within us. Its evil is negative, rather than positive ; and, whilst still in conflict with the powers of darkness, and still belonging to the Church Militant, we are *more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us*. Instead of being in a state of rebellion against the King of kings, we are now fighting under His banner, and have sworn eternal allegiance to His government. We are not less in the Spiritual conflict after Sanctification than before ; but, having conquered the power of sin in ourselves, we join in the great *battle of God Almighty*, to subdue every rebel against His throne.

Repentance, Faith, Conversion, Sanctification, and Perfection, may be illustrated by the history of God's people leaving Egypt and journeying to the Promised Land. In Repentance, we leave the bondage of sin ; in Faith, we pass through the Red Sea and the wilderness ; in Conversion,

we take possession of the Promised Land ; in Sanctification, we subdue and drive out all our enemies ; and, in Perfection, we develop the resources of our possession, and are prepared to extend the glory of the God of Israel to all the nations around. But, alas ! many are like God's ancient people : some desire to return again to Egypt ; others see only giants before them ; others, as soon as they possess the good land, begin to take their rest, and allow their enemies to remain *as thorns in their sides*, until they are again taken captive by them. But, like Israel, it is our privilege to *go up at once and possess the good land ; to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and go on unto perfection.*

SECTION II.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION AS A PROGRESSIVE PRINCIPLE IN THE MIND.

We can only speak of Perfection in a progressive being in an accommodated sense. God only is, in the strictest sense, absolutely perfect. *The spirits of just men made perfect* in heaven have not reached absolute Perfection, more than the saints in earth. *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us :* and still *our love may abound yet*

more and more. We may, however, apply the term absolute to Christian Perfection, because, in its attainment, we are not merely relatively righteous, but, in loving God with all the heart and mind and soul and strength, we possess the positive elements of the Divine Life; and Divine Love can only exist in a progressive being by growth, expansion, and development. We therefore define Christian Perfection to be PERFECT PROGRESS OR GROWTH IN THE DIVINE LIFE.

One of the strongest principles of our nature is the love of progress. It is kindled in the breast of childhood, burns in the soul of manhood, and glows in the heart of old age. And, just as all life and beauty depend upon growth, and as everything begins to decay when it ceases to grow, so, not only the beauty and excellency of the Christian Life, but its very existence, depends upon its progress. A progressive being must either be rising into holiness or sinking into corruption.

Nothing is capable of so much growth as our Spiritual Nature. The Spiritual is the highest possible life; and the higher the life the wider the sphere of growth, and the greater the capability of expansion. Physical growth unobstructed is very great; intellectual growth is

still greater. It is wonderful to see the child learning his first small words, and then to behold the man grasping worlds of knowledge; but nothing is capable of so much development as man's Spiritual Nature. When man is sanctified throughout, *spirit, soul, and body*, all the powers of mind and body centre in the Perfect Life. When Holiness becomes the governing principle of the mind, all its faculties and powers assimilate to God.

The principles of growth are the same in our spiritual as in our intellectual nature. God gives to each the principle of growth, surrounds each with the elements of growth, and imparts to each a living power, by which it can advance to Perfection. In the great scheme of Redemption there are provided all those Spiritual properties by which the highest state of Christian Perfection, of which man is capable, can be realized. *This mind may be in us which was also in Christ Jesus*: and as we fully embrace Him, and assimilate to Him, we realize all truth, all goodness, and all perfection. The earlier stages of the Perfect Life are chiefly Intuitional. There is simply that elevated state of the consciousness, in which all the higher capabilities of our nature concentrate into a holy emotion, gazing

immediately upon Christ and truth ; in which the Intellect, the Sensibility, and the Will seem to blend into one grand principle of Divine Love, and God becomes all in all. We thus partake of Divine Nature, and in this principle there are folded up all the germs of Divine truth, all the forms of Divine thought, all the wonders of Redeeming mercy, and all the realities of Absolute Being.

Nothing finite can be more perfect than the principle by which we emerge from self into God, and from sin and selfishness into pure benevolence. The Intellect, which had before viewed truth chiefly in reference to self, now contemplates it in relation to the great plans and purposes of God in Redemption ; the Emotions which had risen but little higher than their own gratification now become well-springs of pure beneficence ; the Will which had yielded to the appetites and passions now moves in perfect harmony with the Conscience and Affections, and readily chooses whatsoever is lovely and of good report, refusing to sanction anything that is not of Divine authority, but hasting swift as the lightning to do the Divine Will. This must be Absolute Perfection in a finite being, because this is the intrinsic good in being,

and contains the highest good of the universe. We can conceive of nothing higher in a finite being than perfect progress in these Divine principles ; and, when we think of the degrees of excellence of which we are capable, from the first experience of Holiness on through eternal ages, ever perfect yet ever expanding into higher and yet higher attainments, we see the greatness of human destiny, and the vastness of the love of God manifested in Redemption.

SECTION III.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION IN RELATION TO GOD'S PROGRESSIVE LAW.

The plan of Redemption seems to be similar to the plan of Nature. God has chosen in everything the law of development. Revelation itself is progressive. The latter part of the Pentateuch gives us much clearer views of God than the former. The Psalms exhibit more distinctly the Divine life. The prophets unfold to us this life in connection with the purposes of God, and the great scheme of Redemption, until, *in the fulness of the time, Christ Himself is sent forth, made under the Law, that He might redeem them that were under the Law.*

In the New Testament, also, we discover the


same law of progress. St. John gives us a fuller Revelation than St. Matthew. Christ said that, at the first, He was obliged to teach His disciples in proverbs ; but that the *time would come when He would reveal Himself more perfectly*. This was fulfilled when *He opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures*. He also sent His Holy Spirit, *to lead them into all truth, and to bring to remembrance all that He had said to them*. In the Acts of the Apostles, God has shown us the influence of the Gospel upon various peoples and tongues. The Epistles reveal Divine truth as bearing upon the different phases of human thought and of human error. St. John opens heaven itself to us ; all the glories of the eternal world pass before the eye ; and we catch the echoes of the songs of the redeemed. Now this progression in the Revelation of Divine Truth is a type of the progress of Spiritual life. Man himself has to pass from the Pentateuch to the vision of St. John in Patmos. Every man must pass through the whole of the Divine plan. Like Abraham, he must leave his kindred ; like Moses, he must go to Sinai ; like the disciples, he must ascend the Mount of Beatitudes ; like Christ Himself, he must go to Calvary and be cruci-

fied with Him—*must know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death.* Then he must go to the *upper-room at Jerusalem, and wait until he is endued with power from on high* ; and, being *filled with the Holy Ghost*, he must go from place to place, preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, until, at last, he finds himself on some Patmos, wrapped in the cloud of God, with heaven opened to his ravished view, and *the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Peace* within the Grasp of Faith.

The plan of Redemption being progressive, all the doctrines of that plan must be equally progressive. All the elements of the Christian life were found in the Old Testament Scriptures ; but there is not a single truth in the Old Testament which has not been embodied in the New Testament. The illumination which the Apostles received was to enable them to understand the teachings of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, concerning Christ ; but the Plan of Salvation could not be fully understood until Christ was manifested in the flesh ; and the Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost. Then was seen the perfect instead of the imperfect, the *unchangeable* instead of the *change-*

able, priesthood. The Sacrifice was offered once for all, instead of the oft-repeated Sacrifice. Instead of the blood of bulls and of goats, sanctifying to the purifying of the flesh, the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purging the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.

All the doctrines of the Bible are progressive: as all the doctrines of the Bible are necessarily principles of Divine Truth applied to the human mind, all Christian doctrine must, in our apprehension of them, be progressive. They can only be unfolded to the mind as the mind opens itself to the light. Nearly all doctrine consists in some self-evident truth revealed to the mind, which it can perceive intuitively, by a direct gazing upon it. But every truth has its logical as well as its intuitive form. St. Paul speaks of *leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and going on unto Perfection; not laying again the foundation of Repentance from dead works, and of Faith towards God, of the doctrine of Baptism, and of laying on of hands, and of Resurrection of the Dead, and of Eternal Judgment.* The principle involved in Repentance, though left in its original form, is applicable to every stage of Christian progress. In its most



simple form it is the mind turned upon itself in relation to God ; and it is easy to see the development of this principle in the highest perfection of the Christian life. Is not thought upon ourselves, in relation to God, the one condition of all Christian advancement ?

Faith is also progressive. St. Paul speaks of the *Faith* of the Thessalonians *growing exceedingly*. Faith has also its intuitive and logical form. In its principle, it is simply trust, or grasping ; but it stretches away from the mere intuition into the *length, and breadth, and depth, and height* of the purposes of the Divine Government. Every exercise of the understanding gives wider and clearer views to the mind, and enlarges the sphere of its operation, bringing new objects within the grasp of Faith. Sir William Hamilton speaks of Faith as our ultimate conviction, reposing on Divine Authority. Coleridge designates it the Synthesis of the Reason and the individual will—thus making it a form of beholding and a principle of acting. Dr. Morell calls it our highest intellectual sensibility—that high elevation wherein knowledge and love are inseparable, in which the Cherub and Seraph are blended. There is, we think, a grand truth, with some amount of error, in each of these

definitions ; but each includes the exercise of the understanding upon truth, until it becomes a synthesis of Pure Reason, and until it can be so grasped by the mind as to be formed into Character—thus raising the intuitional consciousness into a commensurably higher life.

The doctrine of the Resurrection and of Eternal Judgment is also progressive. At first we receive some indistinct notion of these great truths ; but, as they are revealed more clearly to us, we see the relation of our Character to the future, and think no sacrifice too great, no discipline too severe, by which we can rise to the greatness of our Eternal Destiny.

SECTION IV.

PERFECT PROGRESS, PERFECTION IN CHRIST JESUS.

As the great *Source* of all Christian doctrine is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the measure of our attainment in the Divine Life must ever be limited by the extent of our knowledge of the person of Christ. We do not know what would have been the subjects of man's study had he never sinned ; but, certainly, now the one all-important study in the present world

is Christ and His Salvation. There is in this subject all that the highest capacity can reach in time and in eternity. God acts upon us only through the intelligence; and the only knowledge that can possibly influence the character is a knowledge of Christ. We may know Him in some sort without trusting Him; but we cannot trust Him without knowing Him. The simplest acquaintance with Him may be saving; but *the Angels desire to look into the sufferings of Christ and the glory that shall follow.*

Christian Perfection consists in realizing Christ in His several relations to us. He is our *Way*—we walk in Him. He is our *Truth*—we embrace Him. He is our *Life*—we live in Him. He is our *Lord*—we choose Him to rule over us. He is our *Master*—we serve Him. He is our *Teacher*—instructing us in all that relates to the present. He is our *Prophet*—pointing out the future. He is our *Priest*—having atoned for us. He is our *Advocate*—*ever living to make intercession for us.* He is our *Saviour*—*saving to the uttermost.* He is our *Root*—we grow from Him. He is our *Rock*—*we build upon Him.* He is our *Bread*—we feed upon Him. He is our *Door*—*we enter the fold by Him.* He is our *Shepherd*—*leading us*

into green pastures, and beside still waters. He is the *True Vine*—we abide in Him. He is the *Water of Life*—we slake our thirst from Him. He is the *fairest among ten thousand*—we admire Him above everything. He is *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person*—we strive to reflect His likeness. He is *the Upholder of all things*—we rest upon Him. He is our *Wisdom*—we are guided by Him. He is our *Righteousness*—we cast all our imperfections upon Him. He is our *Sanctification*—we draw all the sources of the Holy Life from Him. He is our *Redemption*—redeeming us from all iniquity. He is our *Healer*—healing all our diseases. He is the *Sun of Righteousness*—cheering us amidst our darkness. He is our *Friend*—relieving us in all our necessities. He is our *Brother*—cheering us in all our difficulties : and, when we need Him no longer on earth, *He is the Lamb in the midst of the throne above, the Light of heaven, leading us into living fountains of waters.* Thus, with every new view of Christ, we open a new window into the chambers of the mind, until it becomes radiant with His own light and purity—until we become completely *like Him*, and are enabled to *see Him as He is.*

The Character of Christ is the standard of all perfection. The highest state of Christian Perfection must necessarily be the nearest possible likeness to Christ Himself. He is its *Author and Finisher*, and we can only be perfect as we are perfect in Him. *He was tempted on all points, like as we are, yet without sin*: and in Sanctification we approach to the nearest possible resemblance to Him; so that we can begin *to grow up into Him, our Living Head in all things*. Whilst Christ was perfectly Divine, He was also perfectly human; and, "whilst His Divinity is His own, His humanity is ours." We look upon Philosophers, Poets, Statesmen, Heroes, Men of Science, and think that but few men can imitate them; but in the Character of Christ there is something so perfectly simple and human that the feeblest can resemble Him. Whilst He embodies all excellence, human and Divine, and none can equal Him, yet the weakest saint can breathe His Spirit and copy His example. Men fail to reach Perfection because they aim at some ideal of the imagination instead of the simple life of Christ, and overshoot the mark by exaggerations which are altogether unnatural, and which bear no resemblance to the character of Christ. In most

instances the Christian Life is imperfect, not so much from want of growth as from want of the knowledge of Christ. What symmetry and proportion are to Physical growth, likeness to Christ is to Spiritual growth, and the deviation from the one and the other, instead of producing perfection, produces a malformation.

One of the great marks of Perfection in the Character of Christ was the perfect harmony of His whole nature. We know not in what He was most perfect, because he was altogether perfect. There was seen in His Mental, Moral, and Spiritual Nature, the most perfect harmony with all Divine excellence and the most perfect unison with all truth, all beauty, and all goodness.


There are Christian men who have cultivated only the Intellect, and have no taste but for the purely intellectual. A sermon, a book, or even a prayer, is estimated only by this standard. All feeling is regarded by them as weak sentimentalism, and morality itself seems secondary to a high state of intellectual culture.

Others are all Emotion. They can only be moved through their sensibility. They cannot live except in an intensely heated atmosphere. Place them in a natural temperature, and, like

exotics, they droop and die. Their favourite expression is, "Religion is not head work but heart work," forgetting that the heart and the head are dependent upon each other. They will go any distance to hear a sensational sermon, and use any means to kindle the fires of excitement. Every clearer view of the Character of Christ, every effort towards a more perfect conformity to Christ, every incentive to work, think, and speak for Christ, is of secondary importance, as compared with anything that will produce intensely excited feelings.


There are others who cultivate only their Moral Nature. With them the perfection of the Christian Life is nothing higher than a high state of justice, honour, and honesty. They care but little about the attainment of knowledge, and are insensible to all that can kindle emotion,

Now all these excellences, when cultivated separately, tend only to produce deformity in the Christian character, and the fact that these deformities have been so apparent in many men of the highest position of the Christian Church has been the cause of the aversion of men of taste and refinement to the true doctrine of Christian Perfection. They have mistaken



some caricature for the perfect harmony of all the faculties as seen in Jesus Christ. The Intellect is beautiful, but only when warmed by affection ; love is beautiful, but only when governed by knowledge ; and Morality has but little attraction in it when it does not spring from intelligence and benevolence ; but let them all combine harmoniously, and the character becomes transcendently beautiful. All men possess a preponderance of some particular faculties, which no natural culture can harmonize ; but every man, by being renewed by Christ and imitating Christ, can bring his whole nature into perfect harmony.

The Apostle Paul compares the formation of the perfect character to a building, from its foundation to its completion. Many men do not build upon a right foundation : they do not rest upon the Rock of Ages. Consequently, though they build with the proper materials, when *the rain descends, and the storm beats, the building falls*. Others build *upon* Christ, but do not build *from* Christ. They draw their materials from their own imagination, or some other human source, and their structures are but the *wood, the hay, the stubble*, which must perish, and not *the gold and the silver*, which




will stand the fires of the last day. They mis-apply human Reason by supposing that it can reveal Divine Truth, instead of discovering it when revealed. They will not work from the Divine Plans, and the Divine Architect must condemn all their work, because it is not in accordance with His requirements, and will not answer His purpose. Others build with the specified materials, and observe the general outlines of the Divine Plan, but will not observe the details. They are constantly discovering some defect, or making some alteration, or adding some ornament. They would gladly reach perfection, but their opinions differ from God's ideal of beauty; and, when their views differ from God's, they think that there should be at least some modification. But the Divine Architect can sanction only what is in strict accordance with His own Plans. *In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;* and, from love to us, He cannot yield to our ignorance.

Others build according to the Divine Plan, and with the right materials, but disregard the true principles upon which the stability of the Divine Structure depends. They either do not build uprightly, or, whilst paying the greatest possible

attention to the outward appearance, they neglect to fill up the hollow places in the wall, which thus become a source of weakness to the building: and the higher it ascends the more certain, and the greater, will be the fall. It is only when God's Plans and Specifications are fully observed, when we refuse to add a single element to the temple of God that is not in perfect harmony with Divine Truth. It is only as Christ is the *Foundation that the whole building, fitly framed together, groweth into a Holy Temple in the Lord, and becomes a habitation of God throughout the Spirit. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.*

Christian Perfection, then, is Christ-like Perfection. He is its Divine Prototype, and every man who is Sanctified throughout spirit, soul, and body, is perfectly like Him, in kind, though not in degree. The weakest, as well as the strongest—the man of one talent, as well as the man of ten—can thus be like Him, and with every new effort can *grow up into Him*, and can every day attain to higher degrees of Chris-



tian excellence. He is not only true, but is *the Truth*—our perfection consists in being true to Him. He not only loves, but *He is Love*—our love is perfect by perfectly loving Him. He is not only righteous, but *He is Righteousness*—we are perfectly righteous in Him. He is not only wise, but *in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*—we are perfect in wisdom as He becomes to us *the wisdom of God*. The moment that He becomes supremely the governing principle of our life, we are perfect in Him : and this is absolute Christian Perfection. Seeing that Christ unites in Himself all excellence, and that man is eternally progressive, there are, of necessity, degrees of Christian attainment, ranging from initial Sanctification to the Perfection of Christ Himself. He will, no doubt, unfold new beauties and glories in the eternal world; but, as manifested in the present world, there are beauties and glories enough in Him to beautify and glorify the grandest faculties of the human mind : and, just in proportion to our conformity to Christ's perfect humanity, so will be the degree of knowledge that we shall gain of His Divine Nature, and of His Infinite plans and purposes in Redemption.

Thus Christ, by His perfect humanity, is

brought near to human nature ; thus Perfection in Him is the perfect exercise of the human mind in relation to Him ; and thus Perfection must be attainable by all, because the ALL that each can attain to is the synonym for Perfection in Christ. Self-righteousness does not consist in the consciousness of the power of self-action in the Christian life, but in the delusion that that consciousness of power is not a condition, but the cause of that life. The act that trusts Christ and commits itself to Him, also renounces all Self-trust and Self-will. But this act necessarily supposes confidence in ourselves as well as in Christ. We cannot conceive of the idea of trust in Christ without the corresponding idea of power in ourselves, aided by Divine Grace, to trust in Him. Quite as many fail to trust Christ from want of confidence in themselves as from want of confidence in the willingness of Christ. The Bible, from beginning to end, is one grand appeal to the power which we possess ; and it assumes that the reason why we do not reach Perfection is that we do not perfectly exercise the power that we may possess in connection with the perfect work of Christ. God recognises the same power in connection with Christian perfection

as we do in relation to human perfection. We have not one set of faculties to fulfil the conditions of earth, and another to fulfil the conditions of heaven. When God calls upon a man to work out his own salvation, or to go on unto perfection, He means precisely the same thing as man does when he requires of his fellow the attainment of some earthly excellence. All that constituted Christ's perfect humanity are human perfections, and consequently are perfectly imitable. In Him was perfect benevolence, perfect meekness, perfect humility, perfect self-sacrifice, perfect sympathy with all sorrow and suffering. These could never be embodied by us if understood merely as abstract principles, and could never have existed in human nature if they had not existed in the Man Christ Jesus ; but, having existed in Him, and being brought into perfect fellowship with Him, we follow His perfect example, we embody His perfect character, we breathe His perfect Spirit, we reflect His perfect likeness, and thus we become perfect in Christ Jesus.

SECTION V.

*SOME MISAPPREHENSIONS RESPECTING
CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.*

This doctrine has suffered more from its friends than its enemies. Some have declared it to be a state of Perfection which precludes the possibility of sinning. They overlook the fact that this, in its strictest sense, would be imperfection, because such a state, in a finite being, is inconceivable, except in creatures of necessity. It would also require man's removal from this world of sin and temptation. This is no part of the great scheme of Redemption, until the ordinary time of death, and would make a holy character impossible.

Others have thought that Christian perfection consists in the removal of everything connected with man's depraved constitution ; so that the children of holy parents would be no more depraved than the children of Adam would have been if he had never sinned. This is the fallacy of making depravity a positive operating principle of evil, pervading man's entire moral constitution ; but, if it were a substance that could be communicated, it could be no sin in those to whom it was communicated more than those diseases of the body which are trans-

mitted to posterity. Supposing, however, it be an evil tendency, and supposing the absence of those qualities which could counteract that tendency, may it not be transmitted by the holy as well as the unholy? Holiness, like Knowledge, is an acquired quality, and cannot be imparted to a child, more than the knowledge of some science, art, or language. No doubt, certain tendencies are considerably modified by the state of the individual in whom they exist. We see in certain families and nations certain distinguishing mental and physical characteristics, and we do not doubt but that in many instances the evil tendencies in the children of the godly are considerably modified; but no law can be established by which parents can transmit to their offspring their exact characteristics. If, however, the law were perfect, and the child could receive all the qualities of his immediate parents, this could be no reason for supposing that the Divine Life could be communicated from parent to child. If moral or spiritual qualities could be transmitted, they would cease to be moral or spiritual. Whilst the Holy Spirit quickens man's dead spirit into the Divine Life, he does not impart the power to transmit that life.

The highest possible attainment of the Divine Life consists in the highest possible acquired qualities. Grace does not in this world destroy our depraved nature : it only subdues our natural depravity. It is a part of the discipline through which we rise to Perfection, that we are subject to the infirmities of the flesh and the temptations of a depraved nature. It is no part of the Divine Plan to remove from us our susceptibility of evil, but to bring it under the control of righteous law. The Spirit in man, when quickened into the Spiritual life, is still a fallen spirit, and is incapable of transmitting anything but a fallen nature. The Divine Spirit, by which man forms a holy character, is a gift to a free being in a state of contrite trust in Christ, and can relate only to the individual character. Each child that comes into the world, therefore, needs individual Redemption, and must fulfil for himself all the conditions of individual Salvation from sin.

We have nothing whatever to do with the question as to how far it is possible for God to remove the evil tendency in human nature ; we only know that the Bible contemplates no such possibility ; nor has a single instance been known of the child of the holiest parents being



free from a depraved bias ; but some of the most godly parents have had some of the most ungodly children. A race of beings free from evil tendency would require a new revelation, a new system of moral government. For them, Redemption would be supererogatory, and the songs of the redeemed could no more be sung by them than by the angels.

Others have taught that Christian Perfection includes the impossibility of error, or infirmity, or defilement ; but we cannot conceive of such Perfection in any but the infinitely Perfect God. Christian Perfection stands in the same relation to absolute perfection as perfect honour in a merchant, perfect fidelity in a wife, and perfect filial affection in a child. We fully understand what these mean. There may be many temptations, many errors of judgment, even some momentary thoughts of delinquency ; but our common sense is satisfied, and the conditions of perfection are fulfilled, when there is the highest possible *principle* of honour, fidelity, and filial affection, governing the life. And we need not fix the standard of the Divine Life higher than God has raised it. He tells us that if, amidst the infirmities, the weaknesses, the errors of our depraved nature

subject to all the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, we are governed by the laws of the Spiritual life—if we choose Him in all things, love Him above all things, and trust the Infinite merits of Christ to atone for our imperfections in all things—then we reach His standard of the perfect life—the efficacy of the blood of Christ making perfect all our imperfections. The man who has risen to this attainment, though he rejoices with trembling, and feels every moment his need of the merit of Christ's death, is, with St. Paul, *persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus his Lord.*

We must ever keep in mind that Christian Perfection is the Perfection of working, not the reward of labour; the Perfection of patience, not the bliss of those who *come out of great tribulation*; the Perfection of heroism, not the glories of eternal victory; the Perfection of *suffering with Christ*, not the being *glorified with Him*; the Perfection of the Church Militant, not of the Church Triumphant; the Perfection

of progress, not of ultimate attainment. Though our enemies have been subdued, and the forces of evil conquered within us, not a single enemy is dead, nor a force of evil destroyed. As in Bunyan's Allegory, the Diabolonians, when their master was deposed, and his images destroyed in the streets of Mansoul, retired to the caves and cellars of the city, and there plotted mischief; so the Prince of the power of the air lurks in every secret place, to make his attack upon us. The God-man Himself, though infinitely Perfect, was *tempted in all points, like as we are*; and those who are *nearest the eternal Throne came out of great tribulation*. The Perfect Christian life is like the Perfect natural life. The man who attains to the highest natural excellence is not more free, on that account, from trial and temptation. On the contrary, every new victory brings with it new territory to govern, and lays upon him new responsibilities; but every excellence gives him new strength of endurance, greater power over circumstances, and greater control over every opposing force. So it is with the Christian. He finds with every step of advancement greater responsibilities, greater difficulties, and greater enemies; but he gains greater courage, greater strength, greater

confidence in *the weapons of his warfare, which are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds.* He so trusts in the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength, and has on him so completely the whole armour of God, that amidst the fiercest conflict or the greatest trial he has Perfect victory.

Thus we may add to our faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For, if these things be in us, and abound, they make us that we shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for, if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. i. 5-11).

“Love is the key to knowledge—to true power,
And he that loveth all things knoweth all.
Religion is the true Philosophy !
Faith is the last great link 'twixt God and man.
There is more reason in a whispered prayer
Than in the ancient lore of all the schools :
The soul upon its knees holds God by the hand.
Worship is wisdom as it is in heaven.
I do believe ! help Thou my unbelief !
Is the last, greatest utterance of the soul.
God came to me as truth—I saw Him not ;
He came to me in love—and my heart broke ;
And from its inmost depths there came a cry,
My Father ! O my Father, smile on me !
And the great Father smiled.”

Stanyan Bigg.

“O love! thy essence is thy purity !
Breathe one unhallowed breath upon thy flame,
And it is gone for ever, and but leaves
A sullied vase—its pure light lost in shame.”

L. F. Landon.

“Nothing can be more evident, than that, exclusive of revelation, man cannot be considered as a creature left by his Maker to act at random, and live at large up to the extent of his natural power, as passion, humour, wilfulness, happen to carry him ; which is the condition brute creatures are in : but that, from his make, constitution, or nature, he is in the strictest and most proper sense a law to himself. He hath the rule of right within. What is wanting is only that he honestly attend to it.”—*Bishop Butler*.

“I am sure there is a common spirit within us, yet makes no part of us, and it is the Spirit of God—the fire and scintillation of that noble essence which is the life and radical heat of spirit, and those essences which know not the virtue of the sun—a fire quite contrary to the fire of hell. This is that gentle heat which brooded on the waters, and in six days hatched the world : this is that irradiation that dispels the mists of hell, the clouds of fear, horror, despair, and preserves the region of the mind in serenity. Whoever feels not the warm gale of gentle ventilation of this spirit (though I feel his pulse), I dare not say he lives.”—*Sir Thomas Browne*.

CHAPTER VII.

LIMITS OF HUMAN POWER IN THE PERFECTION OF THE DIVINE LIFE.

“A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.”—*Matt.* vii. 18.

“He that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it ; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”—*Matt.* xiii. 23.

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit ; so shall ye be my disciples.”—*John* xv. 8.


“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance : against such there is no law.”—*Gal.* v. 22, 23.

“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”—*Phil.* i. 11.

WE know ourselves by consciousness, we know others by their fruits. The Saviour has made the actions of men the test by which we may judge their character. God only knoweth the heart. We have no right to judge motives, except so far as the action is quite clear ; and even then we are bound to exercise the utmost

possible charity. We make a safe estimate of a man when we fairly judge him according to the *uniform* action of his life, and not by some occasional action, or word, or temper. Hence it is no want of charity, if we see the general conduct of a man to be bad, to pronounce the man himself to be bad. It is no part of Christian Charity to give a man credit for virtues of which there is no evidence, any more than it is reasonable to suppose that a tree is good whilst it produces bad fruit.

Great evil has arisen from the assertion that men mean well, although their actions are ill. Every man is painfully conscious that his thoughts and his feelings are worse than his actions, and finds it more easy to control the outward than the inward nature; but the extent to which we cultivate our inward nature will be the limits of its outward manifestations. We are therefore dependent upon the fruits of the Divine Life for guidance in estimating the perfection of that life. When *the earth brought forth fruit abundantly God, declared it to be good*. This was to be the type of the moral world, and to prefigure each individual man. Each man was to form a world out of himself, perfect in beauty, and abundant in fruitfulness:



“the microcosm, the adding up of works.” As every tree in Nature produces fruit after its kind, so man is capable of bearing fruit according to the qualities of the mind and the governing principle of the life. By being united to Christ by a living Faith we partake of His nature, and bring forth the fruits of His Spirit.


SECTION I.

NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL FRUIT DISTINGUISHED.

A pernicious error arises from the disposition to deny certain facts of human consciousness, in order to establish the truths of the Bible. We neutralize the effects of many truths of Scripture by our mode of advocating them. There is no need to deny the highest attainment in the natural man, with a view to prove the excellency of the Grace of God in the Spiritual man. Natural goodness is as much from God as Spiritual goodness. We do not detract from the glory of the sun when we speak of the grandeur of the midnight heavens. Surely, the brighter the moon and planets may be, the more glorious the sun must be; for they all derive their light from

him. Thus, man is capable of great excellence apart from that which is the result of a knowledge of revealed truth. Christ is the True Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world ; and it is certain that He is not, by means of Revelation, the Light of the largest portion of mankind. He must, therefore, act upon the Intuitive Consciousness, so that Conscience becomes a law to every man, declaring in favour of Righteousness and Goodness. Reason and Conscience, before they are dethroned, must be on the side of right ; and, even when they become subject to the dominion of sin, they never can approve of it. Every sinful indulgence must be a pain to the Conscience until, by force of habit, the higher principle becomes weakened : hence the heathen at home and the heathen abroad are both alike *without excuse*, because that corruption into which they have sunk was never decreed to them, but is the result of their deliberate choice.

A man may attain to great excellence of conduct towards his fellow-man without rising to Christian virtue, or without being *renewed in the spirit of his mind*. This is especially the case in our own country, where we possess a high standard of moral excellence, derived



chiefly from the Bible. We must never forget that moral culture is as possible to us as intellectual culture. The light of the Bible shines upon the evil and upon the good, and its rain descends upon the just and upon the unjust.

Some of the Saviour's most memorable discourses were addressed to those who had attained to great natural excellence without any spiritual change. Have we not many around us like the Young Ruler, who have *kept the commandments from their youth up*? others, like Nicodemus, *honourable men*, held in the highest esteem? others, like the Scribe, who had studied the Scriptures, and *are not far from the kingdom of heaven*, but have experienced no spiritual change? We cannot see how it can detract from the virtues of the Spiritual life to speak of the virtues of the natural life. We understand the term virtue to mean the choice of moral goodness, or the practice of moral duties; and, were we to affirm that man is capable of nothing good without Conversion, we should be compelled to come to the conclusion that all in whom we see any good are converted. Men are constantly making the greatest sacrifices, and exposing

themselves to the greatest dangers, from no higher consideration than love of man and sympathy with human misery. Many who make no profession of religion, *who even deny the Lord that bought them*, often put to the blush many Christian men in their high sense of honour, strict integrity, conjugal fidelity, filial affection, large benevolence, and great self-control.

It seems strange that we should, with the view of exalting the greatness of the virtues of religion, attempt to disparage human goodness. Does it not give us higher views of the Creator of man to see, even amidst the ruins of the Fall, that the myriads who have never been brought under the influence of the Gospel may practise many virtues, and attain to many excellences ?

The Bible nowhere denies man's natural capability of practising virtue ; but it affirms that, when we have reached the highest possible standard of natural excellence, our good deeds are *as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal without love to God* ; and that, whilst human virtue has its reward on earth, true religion springs from the Divine nature, and *has its reward in heaven*.

We must deny much of the history of the past, if we deny a high degree of natural virtue to man. We will take one instance—Epictetus, a Phrygian slave. He maintained that what things were not in our power ought to be absolutely indifferent to us, such as body, property, reputation, command, or whatever is not our own. One thing only is in our power, the will, or the execution of our deliberate purposes. In it alone can we seek good and evil, happiness and misery. Things which are in our own power we ought to bring to the best state possible; but use the rest according to their nature. And what is their nature? That depends upon the will of God. “Should He wish you to act the part of a beggar, take care to act it naturally and nobly; and the same if it be the part of a lame man, or a ruler, or a private man; for this is in your power, to act well the part assigned to you; but to choose that part is the function of another.” He recognises God as the Father of all, and says, “When ye have shut the doors, and have made all dark within, remember never to say that ye are alone. For ye are not: but God is within, and so is your angel; and what need of light have these to see what ye do?” “When

thou goest to visit any great man, remember that another also above seeth what is done, and that thou oughtest to please Him rather than this one." He ascribes all that is good in his teaching to the inspiration of the Deity: "When thou hast heard these words, O young man, go thy way, and say to thyself, 'It is not Epictetus who has told me these things, from whence did he come by them? but some kind God speaking to him.' Come, then, let us obey God, lest God's wrath fall upon us." He has a high sense of his mission on earth: "How is it possible, says one, if I have nothing, if I am naked, homeless, hearthless, foul, without a slave, without a country, to spend my life in happy calm?" "So God," he replies, "has sent me to show you, in fact, how it is possible. See, I have no country, no home, no wealth, no slaves, no bed, no wife, no children, nothing but the sky, and the earth, and one sorry cloak; and what is lacking to me? Dare to look up to God and say, 'Use me henceforth whereunto Thou wilt: I consent unto Thee, I am Thine. I shrink from nothing that seemeth good to Thee; lead me where Thou wilt; clothe me in what garments Thou wilt: wouldest Thou that I should be in office or out of

office, should live at home or die in exile, should be rich or poor? I will defend Thee for all these things before men." His ideas of the brotherhood of men were very high. He says: "The Cynic, when beaten, will not rush for justice, but will love those who are beating him as with the love of a father or a brother."¹ This is the attainment of a heathen and a slave, having the fewest advantages. We might, also, quote similar passages from Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, and others;² but these quotations are enough to show the extent to which human nature may rise without the direct aid of written Revelation. There is, however, a boundary between the natural and the spiritual man, which no mere natural discipline will enable man to pass. Epictetus himself exclaimed, "Show me (that I may find what I have long sought) one who is truly noble and ingenuous; show me one either old or young." And again: "Let any man show me the soul of a man who wishes to be of the same mind with God, and henceforth to find fault with neither God nor man, to feel

¹ "Light of the World," by A. S. Wilkins, M.A. Pp. 118-122.

² Lecky's "History of European Morals." Maurice's "Lectures on Conscience."

no anger, no envy, no jealousy—in short, who longs from man to become God, and in this mortal frame thinks of fellowship with Zeus. Show me him. Nay, you cannot.” Or, once more, “By heaven, I long to see a Stoic. You say you have not one perfectly formed; but show me one even approaching the type. Grant me this favour, do not grudge an old man a sight, which to this day I have never beheld.” There were in Epictetus many beautiful resemblances of the Christian character, but nothing that could produce in it Spiritual life. Seneca, before him, had said: “No one has strength enough to rise by himself: some one must reach out a hand to him.” Epictetus needed a clear knowledge of the True God, as manifested in Christ Jesus, the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit shedding abroad the love of God in his heart, and giving him the hope of immortality. Then his character would have been perfect; but the lack of this left him the struggle without the victory, the labour without the rest, the dream without the reality, the shadow without the substance, *the death of sin without the life of righteousness.*

We will take one of the verses prefixed to this chapter to guide us in the Apostolic view

of the distinction between the natural and the spiritual man. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, meekness, goodness, faith, temperance.* All these terms are familiar to us in every-day life, and not peculiar to the Christian religion. So the language of the Bible was the language of humanity; and, although every term must necessarily acquire new force and meaning by being employed by the Holy Spirit, still the language of Christianity can only be adopted in the sense in which it is understood in the language of humanity. The language of the Apostle is simply new in its application to the Divine instead of the human life.

The fruit of the Spirit is Love. But, sad as our world is, it would have been much sadder if there were not natural as well as spiritual love. Thank God, there is a vast amount of love in the world, apart from religion. Love blooms outside the gates of Paradise, even amidst the ruins of sin. Massey says :—

“ There’s not a wild-flower blossoming,
With green blood dancing to a blush,
Nor bird of all the greening spring,
But with love’s tender feel doth flush.

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And there is not a heart on earth
That loves but shall be loved again :
Some other heart hath kindred birth,
And aches with all the same sweet pain.

The good God giveth love for all,
The earnest heart to cheer and melt ;
As His own smiles of glory fall
On hidden flowers, unseen, but felt !

Then cheer thee, cheer thee, yearning one—
Keep holy still that love of thine :
Some spirit waiteth long and lone,
For thee, its ministrant divine.”

Our love of country, love of home, our conjugal, fraternal, and filial affection, constitute in the natural, apart from the spiritual, life, a great part of its sunshine.

There is much joy in the natural life of man. Many things in Nature are calculated to awaken joyous emotion. Seneca speaks of joy as a serene and sober motion, and says that they are miserably out that take laughing for rejoicing ; that the seat of joy is within, and there is no cheerfulness like the resolution of a brave mind that has misfortune under its feet. There is no doubt that, even amidst the sorrows and difficulties of human life, a well-regulated mind can cultivate, to a high degree, a spirit of cheerfulness. It would seem that God has given a


susceptibility of pleasure to all sentient life, from its highest to its lowest forms. Alford says :

“What throbbings of deep joy
Pulsate through all I see ; from the full bud
Whose unctuous sheath is glittering in the moon,
Up to the system of created things,
Even to the flaming ranks of Seraphim !”

It would be easy to prove, from various writers, to what an extent most of the other qualities named of the Christian life have been possessed by humanity in every age of the world ; but these instances must suffice. Our object is not to detract from the Christian life, but to remove a common error which supposes that natural virtues constitute the Christian character. This error has led many who have been conscious of possessing natural excellence to conclude that they are true Christians. Yet the one character does not merge into the other, and has no necessary connection with it. There are no conterminous limits ; but, although exercising the same faculties, the one is human, the other is Divine ; the one is earthly, the other is heavenly ; the one is natural, the other is supernatural.

There are three kinds of affection of which man is capable : that which relates to the *body*,

to the *soul*, and to the *spirit*. The first we possess in common with all animals, and is purely Instinctive. There is no virtue in it, more than in the instincts of the brute. The second is of a higher type, and is connected with our Rational Nature. We naturally love that which seems to us lovely, and delight in that which pleases us. We cannot always account for our affections; but there is always something, either imaginary or real, which constitutes the attracting charm. As a rule, we love that most which ministers most to our pleasure, and we soon delight in any pleasing object to which we give our attention. The range of this class of affections is very wide. It may be attracted by the most rigid self-denial, or by the gratification of every sense. It may be sensuous, intellectual, or philanthropic; but neither has any necessary connection with the Divine life: the highest motive may be purely human. It is the third class of affections that constitutes the Divine life, as distinguished from the highest form of the natural life. There is the Love of the Spirit,—that Divine principle within man which delights in God and in the Divine Will. God is a Spirit—this is His Nature: and God is Love



—this is His Character. When the Spirit in man is quickened into newness of life, man resembles God. He becomes in the strictest sense a Spirit having affinity with God,—only finite instead of Infinite; consequently, his character is more like God's, and his soul and body become animated with spiritual life and spiritual love. This is not merely a new class of affections given to the mind; but a new *life*, and a new principle resembling the Divine nature, rather than the human.

It has been thought inconceivable that there can exist in man a spiritual organ, distinct from the soul; but this is not more difficult to understand than that in the same mind there can be Reason as well as Instinct. The spiritual life is as distinct from the intellectual life as the Reason is distinct from Instinct. It is true that the mind is a unit, and must act as a whole. Whilst our Instinct may be in operation without our Reason, and the Reason without our Spiritual Nature, the greater must include the less; and, in the degree in which the spiritual life co-operates, must be the action of our whole nature. The phenomena of the Spiritual Life are so distinct from the natural life, that we are, we think, bound to refer it to a

distinct spiritual organ. This is the point where the limitation of human power ceases—where it realizes God as a Spirit, and delights in Him as a God of Infinite Love, making His Nature and Character the governing principle of the life.

There is much in the Bible—its history of noble lives, its revelation of the Divine Attributes, its discoveries of the future world, its high morality, its sublime poetry—above all, its relation of the life and death of Christ—to call forth the admiration of even the natural mind ; but it is only when it awakens the Conscience towards God, moves man to delight in the nature and character of God, and he is born of the Spirit of God, that he can become a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. This love, which the Spirit produces, is the love of a pardoned sinner reconciled to God through the Atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ. We cannot love God whilst we have a sense of guilt ; but the moment He pardons and purifies us, this very sense of acceptance opens the mind for the *shedding abroad the love of God in the heart by the Holy Ghost given to us.*

We estimate the value of our affections by the greatness of the object. We consider the

love of art, or science, or philosophy, much higher than the love for objects of sensual enjoyment. We regard the love towards a good man as much purer than love for a bad man : how great, then, must that love be which the Holy Spirit produces ! *We love Christ because He first loved us. And he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.* This is the love which was extinguished when man fell, and which has been rekindled by the Spirit of Christ. Love is the essence of the Regenerated life. *He that keepeth My commandments, he it is that loveth Me.* Thus, Love calls into exercise all the activities of the mind. We may love other objects without loving God : but we cannot love God without loving all that He loves, and hating all that He hates. The major must include the minor, and love to God in Christ must include every object of pure benevolence, every purpose of redeeming mercy, and every virtue of Christian Perfection.

“Talk they of morals, O Thou bleeding Lamb !
Thou Maker of new morals to mankind,
The grand morality is love of Thee.”

The cause of all the world's misery is selfishness. The first sin consisted in preferring the gratification of self to the fulfilment of the will

of God. In nothing do we trace human depravity more than in the strong tendency in human nature to the love of self ; and misery and selfishness are correlative terms. We are happy but in the degree in which we practise pure benevolence ; and nothing but pure love to God can produce pure benevolence. We have seen noble instances of philanthropy, apart from true religion ; but nothing has proved strong enough, apart from love to Christ, to conquer the selfishness of the world. Love to Christ is the only fire which many waters cannot quench. This, strange to say, burns the more brightly amidst the waters of indifference : it is, like a river, gathering its strongest force when there are the greatest hindrances to its flow, and bursting its embankments if long confined. There is but one hope for the world ; and that is in regenerate humanity.

The essence of the Divine life being perfect love, all its qualities must correspond. There must be perfect *joy*. The sadness of life arises chiefly either from selfishness or from guiltiness before God : remove both, and we must *rejoice evermore*. The joy of life emanates from the gratification of our strongest desires ; and, in the nature of things, the chances of real-

izing our wishes diminishes in proportion to our love of self and our dependence upon the uncertainty of selfish beings. In a truly unselfish nature the causes of disappointment must be comparatively few. Its chief disappointment is in not being able to *do* good rather than not being able to *get* good. Consequently, the causes of sadness must be exceedingly few, because the opportunities of nearly every one of doing good are exceedingly many. But the man whose sole delight is to do the will of God must constantly receive the desire of his heart, because God's will is always possible to us, and His smile is perpetual sunshine to the soul. Whilst riches make to themselves wings and fly away, whilst the dizzy heights of fame make us often feel delirious, whilst the most beautiful earthly objects soon fade, whilst the highest sensual gratification soon palls upon the appetite and becomes satiety, the soul, delighting itself in the unchanging God, must *rejoice evermore; pray without ceasing; and in everything give thanks: for this is the will of God concerning us.*

The higher we ascend, the purer and more unchanging our pleasure becomes. How great, then, must be the happiness of the purely spiritual man, finding his delight in God; *joying in*

God through our Lord Jesus Christ. This joy is a region into which few clouds can enter. All the springs of perfect love are in God ; and, whilst He is the Spring of all our joys, the Life of our delights, we cannot be sad until Infinite Beneficence fails : *partaking of the Divine Nature*, we partake also of the Divine happiness.

Where there is Perfect Love there must also be Perfect *Peace*. A man may cultivate great tranquillity of mind, under favourable circumstances, or he may possess a very amiable or peaceful disposition ; but there can be no real Peace apart from reconciliation with God. *There is no Peace, saith my God, to the wicked : they are like the troubled sea which cannot rest.* No man can escape sorrow, affliction, and death : and these are the times, of all others, when we want some unfailing source of peace ; but there is none. Though the world has many sources of pleasure and joy, it has none of Peace. Peace is to be found alone in that legacy which the Saviour left us when He said, *My Peace I leave with you, My Peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth give I unto you.* This *Peace which passeth understanding, which keepeth the heart and mind in the knowledge and love of God ;* those profound depths of Peace which dwelt in the

heart of Jesus Himself—unmoved by sorrow, undisturbed by conflict with the powers of darkness, unshaken by the agony of death—He has transferred to His faithful followers. How great must be the calm of the mind that is ruled by the spirit of Jesus! What a depth of meaning lies in those Divine words: *I will keep that man in Perfect Peace whose mind is stayed upon Me, because he trusteth in Me. Great Peace have they who love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them.*

There is little to destroy the quietude of a mind purely unselfish and a heart at Perfect Peace with God. The cause of antagonism is *the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.* When love to God and man becomes Perfect, the Peace must be Perfect. All the agitations that arise in the various relations of life come from selfishness. *Whence, says James, come wars and fightings among you? come they not from your lusts? The carnal mind, being at enmity against God, must be at enmity with God's laws and purposes; and, therefore, the disquietude of the mind must be inconceivably great that is in conflict with God and truth.* There can be no music in the soul that is discordant with all the harmonies of the

universe. There can be no rest for the fugitive spirit that has no home in the bosom of God. We may cry Peace, but there is no peace. It is only when he comes to Christ that he can find rest.

We see Jesus on the Galilean lake. The storm is raging fearfully around Him ; all in the ship are in terror and alarm ; they cry out, *Master, save us ; we perish !* Jesus arose, and rebuked the wind, and immediately there was a great calm. This is what He does for the man in conflict with God. He calms the disturbing elements, by the renewal of the mind into Perfect acquiescence with the will of God ; so that he can say, *Not my will, but Thine, be done.* Reason, Conscience, the Affections, the Will, all blend into the great harmonies of the universe. "A central Peace residing at the heart of agitation," so that his Peace becomes as certain as the unchanging love and power of the infinite God.

Where there is Perfect Love, there will be Perfect *longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance.* What are all these qualities of the Divine life but love governing the tempers and dispositions of the mind ? *Charity suffereth long, and is kind ; charity envieth not ; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh*

not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. If this fruit is not found in the Christian life, the branch cannot have grown from Christ, the True Vine.

But let us not suppose, as J. S. Mill and others affirm, that the most perfect Christian state is the most perfect state of passiveness rather than of action. It was David who said, *Thy gentleness hath made me great.* It was Paul who said, that the *greatest grace was charity.* It was the Divine Man who said, *Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.* Where do we find grander heroism than in David; nobler action than in Paul? and in Christ there exists Infinite Perfection. The gentleness of the Christian is not that tame, passive, ignoble state, which submits to every indignity, and returns a smile for every frown. It has a sense of honour which only the refinement of love can impart; it feels a degree of indignation at the sight of wrong which only a sense of holiness can give; it is conscious of a manliness and courage which only Christian principle can infuse; and it is sensible of a freedom from all that is querulous and unamiable, proud and arrogant, vindictive

and revengeful ; and thus it possesses a calm and noble magnanimity, which only the constraining love of Christ can communicate.

The man who feels the sense of Redeeming love cannot be unkind to others. He who remembers the innumerable sins which God has forgiven him cannot soon be irritated by the trifling offences of his fellow-man. Whilst he remembers the *ten thousand talents which he owes his Lord, he will not seize his brother by the throat, who owes him a hundred pence, saying 'Pay me that thou owest.'* A hasty, uncharitable, unforgiving Christian spirit is a perfect anomaly and a contradiction. We are only Christian as we are Christ-like—as we learn of Him who was meek and lowly of heart, and as, like Him, we are *slow to anger and of great kindness*. Then shall the *world know that Christ is sent by the Father when He is seen in us*. It is the well-spring of love gushing fresh from the heart which will reach the heart, and send forth in every pulsation the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

This living principle of love operates in equal force, producing *goodness, fidelity, and temperance*. "No heart is pure that is not passionate ; no virtue is safe which is not enthusiastic." Love

must energise, and must make the object of its affection an end. Kant has said : " Make no man a means to thy ends, but hold every man to be an end to himself." This is what love must do. Its words are deeds ; and it begins to suspect itself as soon as it begins to make professions. It feels that " actions speak louder than words," and that there is no need of profession when there is reality. God loved, and wrote His love in syllables of worlds of goodness. He loved man, and *spared not His only begotten Son, that with Him He might freely give us all things. Christ loved us, and gave His life a ransom for us all.* True, God has spoken to us in words, but only to explain His deeds ; and *His words cease where His actions cease.*


This Divine principle will regulate every appetite and passion. It will induce man to renounce all unnecessary indulgence. He will abstain from all appearance of evil. He will avoid everything possible by which *his brother stumbleth, or is made weak. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatever he does, he will do all to the glory of God.* This rule will govern everything—every place he visits, every book he reads, every companion he chooses, every school he enters into, every garment he wears, every

article he buys, every word he utters. Thus he ascends the Mount of Beatitudes, and receives all the benedictions which Christ promised His disciples, with the gift of the Spirit in addition. Thus "his soul stands fast to heaven as doth a star, and he who moves him must move all." Thus he is enabled *to comprehend with all saints what is the length and breadth, and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and to be filled with all the fulness of God.*

SECTION II.

SPIRITUAL CULTURE REQUIRED IN CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

Why is there so much barrenness in the Church of Christ? It must be acknowledged that the standard among professing Christians is far below the standard of God's Word. Many do not even believe in the possibility of Conversion in this life; others consider it merely a natural change, and deny the work of the Holy Spirit; others are strongly moved under circumstances of great excitement—such as Revivals of Religion—but, as soon as the excitement ceases, the feeling subsides; and the reac-



tion often leaves an antipathy to true religion, which is very difficult to overcome. Such persons generally blame the Church, and think that, if the Church were more alive, the declension would not have taken place. The fact is, it was an impulse, not a life. Their passive nature only was moved; their active nature was never called into exercise; consequently, their character remained unchanged. This is the acknowledged state of vast numbers in nearly every Christian Church.

Others have been truly converted to God; but have never aimed at either entire Sanctification or Perfection, or believed in the possibility of their attainment. There has been some fruit of a holy life; but it has never ripened into Perfection. They are like vines growing out of doors, that have borne a large quantity of fruit, beautiful to the eye, but the clusters have been sour. There has been too much cold, too many stormy and cloudy days, not enough of the calm and sunshine of God's countenance; consequently, the fruit, though genuine, is useless.

What are the reasons why so few *bring forth fruit sixty and a hundredfold*? Are they not the same as when the *Divine Sower went forth to sow*? Now as then, *some seed falls by the*

way side, and the fowls of the air devour it ; some falls on stony places, where it has not much earth, and forthwith springs up, because it has no deepness of earth : and when the sun is up it is scorched ; and, because it has no root, it withers away. And some falls among thorns ; and the thorns spring up and choke it. Few hear the word and understand it, and bring forth fruit to perfection. The light, moisture, and soil of Divine Truth are as necessary for the growth of the Christian life, as the light, moisture, and soil of Nature. All the first principles of the Divine Life are like the germs in Nature : everything depends upon the conditions of their growth, by coming in contact with suitable elements.

Many have very strong desires after Holiness, but those desires produce nothing : they deceive themselves by supposing that they must be seeking the higher Christian life, because they desire it. It never occurs to them that it would be unworthy of the Infinite God to awaken desires only to disappoint them. Every desire awakened by the Holy Spirit is equivalent to a promise of its fulfilment. All our good desires are kindled by the Holy Spirit. They form a kind of luminous spiritual atmosphere around

our active nature. But desires only mould the character as they pass into the volitions of the mind. They are not necessitated ; they simply furnish to the mind powerful motives of action. There is power in the Will to choose or reject the strongest desires. Persons who express the strongest desires for perfection are often farthest from it. They yield only to their passive nature, without exercising the Active Powers of the Mind. The most indolent husbandman may have the strongest desire to reap a good harvest ; but it is only by fulfilling the necessary conditions that it is possible to do so.

Many expect spiritual fruit without any of the conditions of spiritual culture. They read only secular books, they choose only worldly companions, and converse only on worldly subjects. The books may be good—books of Travel, Art, Science, History, Philosophy, Poetry, Fiction ; the companions may be desirable—amiable, intelligent, honourable ; the subjects of conversation may be innocent, instructive, and moral ; but these have no necessary relation to the religious life. There is no adaptation of means to ends. We have no more right to expect spiritual fruit from secular culture than to expect *grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles*.


The delusion of many is that the grace of God is able to raise them above all worldly influences, and to sanctify every thing : but the preponderating taste for what is merely secular is strong evidence that there is but little hunger in the soul for righteousness. It would be like offering a man stone for bread, when he is hungry for the bread of life, to present him with secular food. When a professing Christian asks whether doubtful amusements are sinful, the very question shows that he wishes they were lawful. The truly spiritual man has no taste for them, and could find no happiness in them. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* We might as well take some plant from the Tropics, place it in the Frigid Zone, and expect it to grow luxuriantly, and bear fruit, as expect to produce the fruit of the Spirit, or to attain to the Perfect Christian Life, amidst the chilling influences of worldly pleasure. The want of adaptation of means to the end is one of the greatest hindrances to spiritual advancement.

SECTION III.

*PERFECT LOVE IN RELATION TO THE
DIVINE LAW.*

Love is the fulfilling of the Law. The end of the Commandment is Charity. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and, if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Against such there is no law. Thus, love does not raise us above the law, as some suppose, but love to God includes every moral element. If there be anything in the love we exercise contrary to God's Law, then our love cannot be of God's kindling; for God's law and love must be in harmony. At the same time, the Law is our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ, who embodies in Himself the whole Law. For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness, to every one that believeth. So that, in loving Christ, we delight in His character and work. Love includes every-

thing. The love of the parent includes every sacrifice, every effort for the good of the child, opposition to all that is opposed to the welfare of the child : and the love of God in Christ Jesus is the summary of the whole Bible, because the whole Bible is the revelation of God's love in Christ. True love to Christ requires no law. When we *love God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves*, the principle of benevolence within us partakes of the nature of instinct, and moves towards God and man, like the love of Christ Himself. It is not affected towards humanity by any attraction or repulsion in individual men. It still delights in all that is delightful ; but it is no respecter of persons : its great passion is intense love for God's ideal of humanity ; and, the greater the repulsion, it feels that there is the need of stronger attraction, to draw it to the true, the beautiful, and the good. It is like hydraulic power : the greater the pressure of human misery, the greater the force that it calls into action. Perfect Love includes the Ten Commandments, and includes every holy Precept of God's Word ; but, instead of feeling a mere sense of obligation in reference to them, Conscience itself is so renewed in love that man can say, *O, how I love*



Thy Law, it is my meditation all the day ! The law has become one great source of delight, until every element of it blend into one grand principle of holy love, centering in God and our neighbour : and this love remains the one indestructible principle within us, surviving the grave, and constituting the Perfect life and bliss of heaven.

“They sin who tell us love can die :
With life all other passions fly,
All others are but vanity.
In heaven ambition cannot dwell ;
Nor avarice in the vaults of hell ;
Earthly these passions of the earth,
They perish where they have their birth ;
But love is indestructible.

Its holy flame for ever burneth ;
From heaven it came, to heaven returneth ;
Too oft on earth a troubled guest,
At times deceived, at times opprest,
It here is tried and purified,
Then hath in heaven its perfect rest,—
It soweth here to toil and care,
But the harvest-time of love is there.”



“There stands the messenger of truth ; there stands
The legate of the skies !—his theme Divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders ; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.

* * * *

He that negotiates between God and man,
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
To court a grin when you should woo a soul ;
To break a jest, when pity should inspire
Pathetic exhortation ; and address
The skittish fancy with facetious tales,
When sent with God's commission to the heart.”—

Cowper.

“Persuasion, friend, comes not by toil of art ;
Hard study never made the matter clearer :
'Tis the live fountain in the speaker's heart
Sends forth the stream that melts the ravished hearer.
Would you, then, touch the heart, the only method
known,

My worthy friend, is first to have one of your own.”—

Goethe.

“Preaching far excels philosophy and oratory, and yet is genuine philosophy and living oratory. No romance equals in wonder the story of the Cross ; no shapes of wonder have the Divine style of Christianity ; and no mode of speaking can surpass in pathos and penetration that of man to his sinful fellows on the themes of God and eternity, Christ and heaven.”—*Eadie*.

“The preacher raises up a new set of objects in the hearer’s mind, producing therein feelings, affections, emotions, ideas ; he renews it, transforms it, and turns it into a likeness of himself. But in this, as in all things, it is only by a Divine virtue that life is transmitted. The sacred fire which warms the bosom of the orator is inspiration from on high : *Pectus est quod disertum facit*. Without this life-giving fire, the finest phrases that can be put together are but sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.”—*Bantain*.

“Not the outer sparkle, but the inner heat, kindles the sympathy of modern hearers. It is true the day of flocking after great orators is not gone by ; but the day of seeing through them is come. Any man of superior ability can call up words and images ; eloquence may be the heartbreaking bounds, but it may also be admirable acting ; and, the shrewder the age becomes, the more will it be distrusted. Therefore, let our clergy begin by distrusting it ; let them cultivate blamelessness of speech, but not display ; let them aim at kindling, not the crackling thorns of fine language, but the steady flame of the love of Christ and of the souls of men.”—*Dean Alford*.

CHAPTER VIII.

HUMAN POWER IN PREACHING.

“Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”—*1 Cor. i. 20, 21.*

“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”—*1 Cor. ii. 4.*

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”—*2 Cor. iv. 7.*

“Christ in you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.”—*Col. i. 27-29.*

“He that winneth souls is wise.”—*Prov. xi. 30.*

THE principal means employed by God in the promotion of the Divine Life are Preaching, Prayer, and Providence. By Preaching man is instructed in the nature and necessities of the Divine Life; in Prayer he makes known to God the desires which Preaching awakens; and by Divine Providence he is placed in those circumstances in which his character is deve-


loped, and the Holy Life fully realized. We shall devote the present chapter to Preaching, because it is chiefly by Preaching that we understand the will of God, both in Prayer and Providence.

SECTION I.

PREACHING IN RELATION TO THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY.

The history of Christianity records that there is a necessary connection between Preaching and the social, moral, and religious condition of any age. The law of cause and effect cannot be more clearly traced anywhere than in the results of Preaching. There must, therefore, be a Human as well as a Divine Power in Preaching. Some Preachers are almost uniformly successful, others generally fail; which shows that Preaching depends upon certain laws which are, to a great extent, within the power of man, and which no acts of Divine Sovereignty supersede.

One of the chief distinctions of Christianity is that it is promoted mainly by Preaching. *It hath pleased God by the foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe.* Truth only becomes the power of God unto salvation as it is pro-




claimed by the living ministry. The Bible alone is not sufficient for the Conversion of the world. The universal testimony of mankind goes to prove that it is only when uttered by the living voice, softened by the tender sympathies of a heart full of love to God and man, that it can prove itself to be *quick and powerful*.

Christianity alone contains truths which can be preached; only Christianity contains principles of universal adaptation, and it is only Christianity in its purest form that can call forth Preaching in its highest degree. The tendency of every error in connection with Christianity is to supersede the necessity of Preaching, because error, as a rule, is safer wrapped up in some human form than unfolded to the public gaze. The tendency of Romanism, Mahometanism, Ritualism, Mysticism, and Rationalism, is to disregard Preaching. They have no scope for Preaching in its true sense. They may propound dogmas, prescribe ceremonials, solve problems, criticise words, analyse arguments, and lay down rules of moral discipline, but they have no Gospel to preach, and can bring no *glad tidings of joy to man*. In the degree in which they depart from the *truth as it is in Jesus*, and become human systems, they lose

their power of proclamation ; but Christianity, the more it is proclaimed, the more it exhibits its Divine beauty and power.

It is the strength of Christianity that it can proclaim only God in Christ, who is the Truth. It would gain, no doubt, a momentary success to pander to human passion and error : but its ultimate triumphs will be won by its purity. It was easy to convert the ancient nations from one superstition to another, because it is easy to pass from one superstition to another. It is equally easy to receive any modern system of error, because all alike exclude the entire subjection of the Conscience and the Will to Divine Truth. Many boast of superior wisdom, because they have relinquished evangelism, and embraced some human system ; but the fact is, they only sink from a higher to a lower principle of their nature, and from what is purely Divine to what is purely human ; adapted to certain states of the human mind, but not to humanity in relation to God.

Most of the ancient systems of Philosophy were supposed to grow out of Religion, and often arose out of the deep longings of the human heart after the Infinite ; but, not containing universal truth, they could not so influence



humanity as to be universally Preached. Those who embraced most earnestly the best systems never made them a text-book for universal proclamation. Socrates, Plato, Zeno, Epicurus, organized no plan for the general spread of their principles. The first sermons ever heard in Greece and Rome were Preached by the Apostle Paul. Christianity originated Preaching in its true sense. Even the Jewish Economy could scarcely be said to include Preaching. Holy men of old proclaimed the truth in a variety of ways, but they did not preach. Under Divine Superintendence, they enacted statutes, exhorted to fidelity, warned against the Divine judgments, predicted future events, sang psalms of praise, uttered words of Divine wisdom, and predicted the Messiah: John the Baptist prepared the way for the Divine Preacher, by preaching the baptism of Repentance; but the great work of Preaching was inaugurated by the Divine Teacher Himself. The first recorded words of Christ's public life are in the capacity of a Preacher. *Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* And almost the last commission to His disciples was to *go into all the world, and breach the Gospel to every creature*


None of the essential conditions of Preaching can be found apart from Christ. The life of Christ was a life of instruction. He went about doing good to the bodies of men; but He made every act of mercy a channel of instruction. He was the Word; and His life was an expression of Himself to man. He qualified His disciples, as far as possible, to follow His example. He was first the Word of God to man, and the disciples became the Word of Christ to man by Christ living in them. This is their ordination, their qualification, and the only Apostolical Succession. The ministers of Christ became His *Ambassadors, beseeching men in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. They Preached not themselves but Christ Jesus the Lord.* There was no mystery about the early spread of Christianity. The first Preachers simply expounded the words of Christ, in the light of His atoning sacrifice, and the work of the Holy Ghost.

The rise and progress of Christianity are commensurate with the rise and progress of Preaching; and its ebb and flow with the ebb and flow of Preaching. The history of the first century of our era shows that Preaching, though in a simple form, was universal, and that the power

of Preaching was very great. Not only the apostles, but those that *were scattered abroad, went everywhere, Preaching the Word*. The writings of the Fathers will account for much of the success of the first ages of Christianity. A great change began to take place about the end of the fourth century. There were still some powerful Preachers ; but the pulpit became the centre of mere dogmatic teaching, instead of the simple declaration of the Gospel of Christ. Augustine, great and good as he was, did much to reduce the gospel to a system of human theology, and the Preacher, to a great extent, to the exponent of the abstract forms of Divine truth. Preaching was still Christ ; but Christ as obscured by heathen philosophy, as seen through Augustine and Pelagius ; so that *the glory of the only begotten of the Father* became hidden by the pride and selfishness of man. On the other hand, pure, spiritual, Christian worship had been corrupted by heathen superstition, and nearly all its idolatries were baptised with the name of Christian ; so that it was easy to open the flood-gates of the corruptions of the dark ages. There was no power in the pulpit to control their deadly influence. The darkness of the sixth century would have been impossible in the first

century, when Preaching was a great power in the Christian Church. It is very clear, from Sozomen and Bingham, that, from the fifth to the tenth century, Preaching had almost ceased to be a power in the Christian Church; and that period is emphatically styled the "Dark Ages" of Christianity.

Preaching revived in England at the time of the Reformation, in the reign of Henry VIII. After the Bible had been translated into English, and printed, incumbents were appointed to teach the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and to Preach, at least once a quarter. There were, however, very few of the clergy who could Preach. Edward VI. provided for constant Preaching, and, eventually, no one was ordained who lacked this qualification. Mary commanded that no one should Preach except in the schools of the universities. Elizabeth at first prohibited it altogether, but subsequently did much for its promotion. Since that time, there has been a succession of *men whose hearts God has touched*—men who have proved to be *able ministers of the new testament*; and, just as we saw everything in connection with Christianity decline with the decline of Preaching, so we witness with its revival the revival of true



religion. Whilst every other agency has failed, wherever the doctrine of Christ has been faithfully Preached, it has proved to be *the power of God unto Salvation*, and has triumphed over all opposition, all persecution, all the malignity of earth and hell.

SECTION II.

THE SOURCE OF POWER IN PREACHING.

One principle runs through the whole of the Divine Life—namely, the power which is necessary to its origination, is equally necessary to its continuance. No elements can constitute the Christian life but those derived from Christ: hence all successful Preaching must centre in Christ and His Gospel. He must be its Alpha and Omega; and, as the object of all preaching is the awakenment of the Christian Life, the utterances of the best of men only become Preaching as they declare the Gospel of Christ.

A discourse may be delivered from the pulpit, by a regularly constituted minister, on the Bible—its evidences, language, history, poetry, geography, discoveries of truth, revelations of the Divine attributes, morality, purity, or benevolence; it may even set forth the person and

work of Christ; and yet it cannot be, in the evangelical sense, Preaching, because all Preaching centres in Christ and His Salvation. Preaching was unsuited to the Old Economy, because it is impossible, to any great extent, apart from Christ. John the Baptist became a Preacher because he was the herald of Christ. The Old Testament, even now, can only be the subject of Preaching as it centres in Jesus Christ. Preaching includes all learning, all eloquence, all enthusiasm; but it is only learning, eloquence, enthusiasm, not Preaching, until it terminates in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The grandeur of the Preacher's mission is that he *Preaches not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord*, and that he *beseeches men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God*. His work is great, because the great work of Christ is committed to him. We may Preach the highest virtue, the purest benevolence, the greatest self-sacrifice; we may attract crowds of people, and awaken in them many excellences; but we only become Christian Preachers as we become united to the Person and work of Christ.


But, whilst all power in Preaching must flow from Christ, its effect upon the world will depend upon its adaptation to the mind of man,

and its adaptation will depend upon the clear apprehension of the truth itself. Our success in Preaching Repentance, Faith, Conversion, Sanctification, will depend upon our knowledge of these doctrines in relation to Christ, and their connection with the laws of the human mind. We can only express what we have experienced in our own souls. One object of Preaching is to bring back the abstract into the concrete. Truth, as revealed in the Bible, is to us abstract. Christ, by becoming the embodiment of all truth, presented all truth in the concrete; but still it is necessary that His life should be reproduced in us before it can become a living power. Repentance can become a power in Preaching, only when Preached by one whose heart has been broken and contrite. Faith can only produce Faith when Preached from the heart that trusts. Conversion can only awaken to Conversion when Preached by a renewed heart. Sanctification can only beget Sanctification when Preached by a sanctified mind. Perfection can only lead on to Perfection when flowing from a spirit that is perfected in love. That "love begets its like" is as true in the spiritual as in the natural world.

It is true that cases might be named of men

who have been the means of the Conversion of others, whilst it has afterwards proved that they themselves, at the time, were not converted. In all cases of this kind, we believe it may be proved that the men who have produced this effect have formerly known the way of life, and, possessing great powers of thought and emotion, have been able to recall their past feelings sufficiently to produce them in others : and God has sometimes spoken through a Balaam as well as a Moses. It requires, however, but little knowledge of the laws of Divine Truth, in connection with the laws of the human mind, to distinguish between these exceptions and the universal law of the natural action of mind upon mind.

The law of power in Preaching is very simple. We know the power of eloquence, as displayed by the lecturer, the politician, the barrister, the general. It requires precisely the same power to excite men to the glory of Christ as to the glory of some earthly king. We need no other powers of argument to awaken men's Consciences to the terrors of the Divine Laws than to the terrors of human laws. The same force of speech that would inculcate the beauties of human excellence is sufficient to




produce Divine excellence. Whilst we see, for example, the barrister persuading the jury to pass a verdict contrary to the evidence, because of his superiority over the counsel on the side of the right, it only proves his superior skill in argument, and that the jury were ignorant of the value of the counteracting evidence, and not that there is any uncertainty in relation to the laws of the operation of mind upon mind. Effects have been produced contrary to the conviction of the speaker; but it has always required, in reference to any great truth, the deepest possible conviction to awaken in man convictions sufficiently strong to move him to action. This law is especially applicable to the Divine Life, because, whilst all that is connected with human life in reference to the present world is natural to us, we can only influence the Divine Life in the degree in which we receive power from on high. Preaching has to overcome the tremendous antagonism of a depraved heart; and this will require, not only the force of truth itself, but also the living force of the Divine Spirit who inspired that truth.

No sermon can produce much effect unless it comes from the Preacher himself. It is of

but little use to have a sermon before him ; it must be *in* him,—he must be himself the sermon. His mind must be saturated with the material of Divine truth, and he must feed upon it as the insect feeds upon foliage—until every cell and tissue is coloured with his food. The truth must influence the mind until it sanctifies wholly, and until the Divine energy pervades the human mind. Divine truth must be in the mind, like the oil in the olive ; like electricity in the wire ; like steam in the engine ; like the spring in the well ; like the soul in the body. Just as the mind lives, moves, and has its being in the truth, so it must live, move, and have its being in Christ, who is *The Truth*.

The nearer man approaches to Christ, the more perfectly he can Preach His Gospel. Many Christian Churches are not perfect, because the Preacher is not Christ-like, and consequently his sermons cannot resemble Him. No Preacher can rise much above his own experience. He may theorize on the ideal of Christianity, and may hold up to view the perfect character of Christ ; but very few will be raised to His standard until he himself rises to it. It is only as perfect love becomes a fire



in the heart of the Preacher himself that he can kindle it in others. It is only as the preacher becomes *full of faith and of the Holy Ghost* that the plenitude of the Spirit will descend upon his congregation. Truth must pass through the mind of the Preacher, just as the blood passes through his heart. Only as it is forced warm and living from the soul of the preacher can it penetrate through the life of the hearers. Thus the source of power in Preaching is the power of Christ living in the Preacher himself; and, in the degree in which it becomes a living force within him, it will become a living force in his hearers. The most powerful Preacher, therefore, is the man most completely filled with the Spirit of Christ, and animated with the love of Christ.


The greatest power in the universe is love to God; and in the degree in which we love God we shall love the Truth, and love the present and eternal well-being of all men. We may Preach from a sense of obligation, and rise to great intensity from the knowledge of the eternal issues dependent upon our faithfulness in Preaching, but the real power of our Preaching will depend upon the perfection of our love to God. This love can melt the hardest

heart, and can kindle in the coldest breast the fires of Heaven. Perfect love to God is therefore the most perfect power in the pulpit, and the measure of the Preacher's power must ever be commensurate with the measure of his love to God and man.

SECTION III.


CONDITIONS OF HUMAN POWER IN PREACHING.

Precious as the Gospel is, it has no power of self-proclamation: it wants a suitable agent and a suitable mode. Men are to be converted, not by miracle, but by means; and these means are to be wielded by human hands. To the Church is intrusted the salvation of the world. This is its Mission and its work. God may have other means by which He could accomplish His purposes in the earth, but none other have been revealed to us: and Infinite Wisdom must have chosen the best. We do not require any other means: the means that Christ has chosen, when properly applied, have proved to be all-sufficient. There is no need, as some suppose, for Christ to come again upon the earth.



He has finished His earthly work, and we only require to Preach Him by men full of Faith and of the Holy Ghost. The province of Preaching is to instruct the natural mind and to arouse the Conscience in reference to spiritual things. Divine Truth is the light which reveals God in Christ, and the plan by which we may be reconciled to Him. Preaching simply declares what is, and what may be, and its power consists in bringing us into immediate contact with that Divine power which truth reveals. We do not exalt human means in this view. The human mind is but the transparent medium which the truth illumines, and which the Spirit alone can make luminous. It is the prism from which the Divine light radiates, and through which its beauties are seen, and its influence felt.

Preaching is necessary, because we possess Revealed Truth; and Revealed Truth is necessary, because we are creatures of sense. This is the most perfect accommodation to our present state of existence. Divine Truth is too spiritual to operate upon our sensuous nature without a medium affecting our senses. It is the consciousness of this adaptation which must constitute one of the necessary conditions of



success in Preaching. No man can successfully Preach without being deeply convinced that, by the aid of Divine Truth, he has power over the human mind, and that the human mind has power to obey the Truth when rightly applied. The Apostle Paul, for example, acted on this principle. *My speech and my preaching*, he said, *was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of Power.* Yet he could not have displayed greater powers of argument or eloquence, nor employed a profounder human Philosophy, if every thing depended upon these for success. He impressed upon Titus that it must be by *sound doctrine, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, that he might convince the gainsayers, and that he that is of a contrary part may be ashamed.* "We may deny the doctrine of Human Power in Preaching as a theorem, and we may deny it among theologians; but, when we are in earnest in the pulpit, we cannot press it home to the careless and sinful. There is something in the sight of perishing multitudes which chokes the utterance of it. We are compelled to assume the power to influence and to obey the Truth."

Whatever may be the danger arising from the abuse of the doctrine of Human Power, the

danger of the doctrine of Necessity is much greater. No doubt, the doctrine of Human Power has produced the error of believing in meritorious works, instead of Justification by Faith. On the other hand, the doctrine of Necessity has led many to Fatalism. All Atheists, Pantheists, Materialists, and Fatalists, are professed Necessitarians. From Leucippus and Democrates, through Spinoza and Hume, down to D'Holbach, Comte, and J. S. Mill, one and all will agree with Augustine, Calvin, and Edwards, in maintaining the absolute, universal necessitation of all events—one principle of causation or fixed invariable sequence ruling all things, material and mental, including even the Human Will. It is a memorable fact in modern intellectual history that the European mind only began to emerge from the sensual Philosophy of Condillac, and the Atheism of the French Revolution, when Maine de Biran, Royer Collard, and Victor Cousin, revived the conception of the Freedom of the Will as opposed to the doctrine of Necessity.

It is a fact of great importance in the history of Preaching that its success may be traced by the degree in which the sense of human responsibility has been felt by the Preacher. Augustine

systematized the doctrine of Necessity ; and from that time the power of Preaching began to decline. The leading Reformers, such as Luther and Calvin, adopted the theology of Augustine ; and the power of the Reformation has diminished most rapidly where the doctrine of Necessity has retained the greatest strength. We may be told that this does not necessarily follow, and may be pointed to the success of the men whom we have mentioned. But the influence of bad systems cannot be seen fully in the men who originated them. These master spirits generally possess some subjective qualities which counteract many of the evils of their systems. We must look for the consequences of any system to those who follow its tendencies, without the neutralizing influences of their authors.


Our own country is no exception to this rule. Among the grandest monuments of our English Literature are the works of the Puritans. But, from the testimony of one of their ablest successors, they left the Church asleep : and it is the boast of that literature that it is true to the doctrines of Calvin. What was the Great Methodist Revival but the revival of the doctrine of Human Responsibility, in opposition to the doctrine of Necessity ? John Wesley held

the doctrine of Grace as firmly as Calvin ; but, just as the influence of responsibility, in connection with Divine Grace, is permeating the Churches throughout the world, at the present moment, there is spiritual life and power.

It may be said that George Whitefield was a Calvinist : true, but he gave so much more prominence to the Truth than to the error that the Truth prevailed. " Strong as the darkness is, the light is stronger, when both come in contact." Whitefield held the doctrine of Free Agency as firmly as if he never held the doctrine of Necessity ; and men felt the Truth that he Preached, and were not conscious of his error. The same may be said of one of the most successful of living Preachers. We have heard him say that man possesses no power, and almost with the same breath he has said—with a force which evinces conviction—that, unless he put forth the power that he already possessed, he must be damned. He said that he could not reconcile the two : of course he could not. The danger is not with such men, whose force of character and sincerity of purpose make them successful in spite of their error, but it is among their feeble followers, who embrace their errors without their Truths. It matters but little

whether men call themselves Arminians or Calvinists, if they feel in every sermon they Preach that they are responsible for the salvation of men. Happily, their number is rapidly increasing; and wherever there is an earnest, thoughtful, godly Preacher, we witness an earnest, thoughtful, and godly Church.

But, whilst the consciousness of power is an essential condition in Preaching, we can only be sensible of power in the degree in which we possess it. The most skilful player cannot play well upon a bad instrument. The Holy Spirit can work in connection with human faculties only as they are rightly directed towards Him. The Preacher stands in an equal relation to Divine Truth and human error, and the knowledge of the one is almost as necessary as the other. Whilst we need a thorough acquaintance with the Scriptures, and to be richly imbued with the Spirit of Truth—and it is well to know the writings of the Fathers,—it is, at the same time, indispensable to know intimately modern error. Modern error is in substance the same as ancient error; but its forms are now protean. It has arrayed itself in the charms of fiction and poetry; it has wrapped itself in the mysteries of Science and Philosophy; it has intrenched it-



self behind the bulwarks of Metaphysics and Logic ; and few can follow it into its labyrinths or seek out its hiding-places ; but the power of the preacher necessarily increases in the degree in which he can with certainty apply the weapons of Divine Truth against all opposing forces.

There will always be a striking correspondence between the state of religious thought in any age and the power of the pulpit. The pulpit has in too many instances floated with the current of the literature of the times, instead of stemming it. The effect of the doctrine of Necessity has been to paralyse intellectual power in Preaching. One of the weaknesses of the modern pulpit is that it does more to arouse than to instruct, more to impress than to educate. It is impatient for the harvest before it has sown the seed or cultivated the ground. It has striven for numbers rather than for godliness. It has often succeeded, but rather by chance than on any principles of certainty ; by stimulants rather than by healthful forces of life. Preachers have often been Empirics rather than intelligent Physicians. Hence a just reproach has often been cast upon ser-

mons, as things to be tolerated rather than desired.

Too many have attempted to act upon the human mind without understanding it. They have endeavoured to answer the cavils of sceptics without full acquaintance with them. They have tried to meet difficulties which they have never mastered, and not unfrequently to silence objections by the assumption of authority rather than argument. Sometimes there has been anything but the love that is holy, and the anger that sins not. There is no necessity that a Preacher should be greatly skilled in dialectics or possess extensive knowledge, in order to be successful ; but he is bound to keep within the province of his knowledge, and to understand thoroughly what he attempts to explain. If he cannot swim, he had better not go beyond his depth.

The curse of many young Preachers has been some small success, gained easily by extraordinary means. They have found that some striking sensational sermons have drawn a volatile multitude, and caused great excitement, which they have mistaken for permanent impression ; but which has really been *like the morning cloud, and the early dew, soon passing*



away, producing nothing for eternity. Their aim is excitement, and they fail to see that great excitement is just as unfavourable to the spiritual as to the natural life—that it frequently quickens only to consume. Whenever the feelings predominate over the intellect, progress ceases, and we become allied to sense instead of spirit. But as the powers of the mind unite in perfect love, all its acquirements must be transformed into that love ; and, as the mind of the Preacher is governed by Divine love, every thought and every feeling will be directed to the most intrinsic good and the most perfect harmony with truth.


No man can make full proof of his ministry who does not acquire the power to promote Revivals of Religion. It is true that the longings for revivals of religion are often the evidence of a state of the Christian life that has risen no higher than the mere quickening of the Sensibility, without the renewal of the Conscience in righteousness. In too many instances they are like powerful remedies applied to extreme states of bodily weakness—the only remedy for a state of spiritual decline—but should never be necessary. The Christian who is always sighing for great excitement is in as unhealthful a

state as the man whose appetite is always craving for some stimulant, or the worldling who is always thirsting for some new sensation. The Preacher who does not succeed by ordinary means has either mistaken his vocation or has failed to qualify himself for his work. The promise is as sure to the Preacher as to the husbandman. God says : *My Word shall not return unto Me void.* The man whose aim is solely the salvation of souls will sooner or later obtain his desire. No man has ever fulfilled the conditions of *winning souls* without receiving from Christ the Converting power. He may fail at times ; but the failure will be the exception, not the rule. There are many who never adapt the means to the end. We should never suspect throughout the sermon that their object was to convince the judgment, to awaken the conscience, and to persuade men to turn to Christ. They are like a physician who should be always lecturing his patients on the science of medicine, instead of applying his skill to their cure. The best doctor is the man who, whilst he most thoroughly understands the principles of his profession, is most skilful in their application to disease ; and he who applies the greatest skill will, in the long run, effect the greatest

cures. There is precisely the same law in Preaching. With many men Preaching has become a science, and, under certain circumstances, they can, as a rule, calculate upon certain success. We have known many men who, throughout a long ministerial life, have witnessed, under a great variety of circumstances, continued success; others have as signally failed. The Preacher who is truly sincere, intensely earnest, mighty in the Scriptures, sensible of his responsibility, imbued with the truth, *full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, loving God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself*, will be able so to promote the Christian life, and bring sinners to a knowledge of the truth, that he will never require any special excitement to keep his Church alive. But no man can preach *full of Faith and of the Holy Ghost*, without frequently witnessing great awakenings, copious outpourings of the Spirit, and mighty ingatherings to the Church of Christ. *Some seed will fall by the way side, or among thorns; but some will fall into good ground, and bring forth fruit, some sixty and a hundredfold.*

Nor is there any great mystery about this success. Its conditions are as intelligible and as completely within the range of Human Power

as success at the bar or in the senate. Whenever did we know a man possessing the requisite qualifications for Preaching, and giving *full proof of his ministry*, who has not succeeded? No doubt, in modern times the forces of evil increase; but the forces of good increase in a proportionate degree. The Gospel is the power of God unto Salvation in one age as much as another. We do not think that the difficulties are greater to-day than during the Apostolic age, or at the time of the Reformation, or the Methodist Revival. We can be to others what we ourselves are. We are constantly more or less influencing each other in all the relations of life. We are, to a much greater extent than is generally seen, what others make us. The unconscious power at work in society is like the unconscious vital forces in Nature. We only know them by their effects. God recognises in all our relations to Himself our human relations, and has chosen to act upon us through human thought, human feeling, and human choice. He has chosen the Preacher as His organ in sounding out to the world the glad tidings of Salvation. God is not less God because He is speaking through a human instrument, and man is not less man because God




speaks through him. But God has fixed laws in speaking to man through man. His voice is the utterance of His holy Will, and He can only speak to minds in harmony with Himself, because the moment the Divine thought passes through the human mind, that moment the thought becomes human, and partakes of the mind through which it passes. It is, therefore, only as the mind becomes intelligent that God's thoughts to man can become intelligent; it is only as the human spirit becomes love, that God's love can pass through it to man; it is only as the human will is determined to overcome the resistance to the truth, that God can carry out His purposes to man. It will be said that this is making God dependent upon man. No: it simply makes God dependent upon the principles of moral government, which emanate from Himself.

It is surely high time to cease talking about what God might do, and to begin to accommodate ourselves to what He is doing. It is for us to recognise the great facts of Christian history; and, instead of asking what God might do *without* us, to ask what He will do *through* us. We know not what He can do without us, but we know that, by strengthening the mind in

the principles of Divine truth, by understanding the laws of the human mind and human error, by being animated with the love of Christ, by possessing a burning zeal for the cause of Christ, by being filled with Faith and with the Holy Ghost, by aiming only at the glory of God and the welfare of man, we can secure the help of God, which will make the word we Preach *mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds* of sin, and the means of *turning many to righteousness, saving many souls from death, of hiding a multitude of sins*, and of hastening the coming of the Saviour's kingdom. Hence, in proportion to the capacity of the Preacher—his sincerity of purpose, the intensity of his zeal, his grasp of Divine Truth, his force of utterance, his entire consecration to the good of being, his strength of confidence in Christ, his depth of sympathy with humanity, and the perfection of his love to God and man—will be the measure of his success in Preaching the everlasting Gospel of the Son of God.

We do not overlook the responsibility of those who hear the Word of God. Many *would not come to the Saviour that they might have life. He could not do many wonderful*

works because of unbelief: and the Word Preached by the apostles often did not profit, not being mixed with Faith in them that heard it. There is still in man *an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.* There is not only infidelity, prejudice, and sinful habit, to overcome; but what is, perhaps, still more difficult, the tendency to hero-worship in Preachers. Many love to hear able sermons, but are altogether indifferent to the truth. They have formed the habit of hearing sermons from curiosity, or the love of novelty, until listening to a sermon has become a mere exercise of the Intellect, or the gratification of the Sensibility. They have no true standard of Divine Teaching. They do not hail every new instructor that can teach them the way of life more perfectly; but they are in a morbid state of mind, always craving after some new gratification. The last thing thought of is spiritual improvement. One is gratified by some elaborate argument, working out some abstract truth; another by the systematic arrangement of the subject; one likes exposition; another prefers striking assertions, startling appeals, brilliant declamation, beautiful pictures, sentimental poetry, or original anecdotes; some consider



the excellency of the sermon to consist in its length; and a still larger number appreciate it according to its brevity.

Now, this method of hearing sermons makes Preaching an end, not a means to the salvation of the soul. But has not the pulpit itself, to a great extent, created these unhealthful desires? Has it not pandered to selfish inclinations and depraved tastes, rather than strenuously endeavouring to elevate them; and, instead of raising human nature to the Divine Standard, has it not lowered the Divine Law to human selfishness? Whatever may be the state of society, it is the business of the Preacher, by the aid of the Gospel, to purify and elevate it. He has no right to complain of hindrances, but to counteract them. He is not a complete master of his work, whatever may be the indifference, if he cannot arrest the attention, arouse the conscience, sway the affections, and govern the Will. Such is the adaptation of truth to the mind, when forcibly applied by a heart itself alive to the truth—a heart filled with the love of God—that it must prevail in any age, under any circumstance: whilst eloquence, reasoning, sympathy, pathos, earnestness, are at all times a great power,

when, pressed into the service of Christ, quickened by the life of Christ, intensified by the love of Christ, applied by the Spirit of Christ, made efficacious by the Atonement of Christ, they must be the power of God unto full salvation.



“ Heaven is the magazine wherein God puts
Both good and evil ; Prayer’s the key that shuts
And opens the great treasure ; ’tis a key
Whose wards are Faith and Hope and Charity.
Wouldst thou prevent a judgment due to sin ?
Turn but the key, and thou mayst lock it in.
Or wouldst thou have a blessing fall upon thee ?
Open the door, and it will shower on thee.”—


Quarles.

“ More things are wrought by Prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me, night and day :
For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves and those who call them friend !
For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.”—

Tennyson.

“There is a sentiment to be found under diverse forms among all men,—the sentiment of the need of some external succour, of a support to the human will, of a force which may lend its force and strength to our necessity. The man searches all around for this support, and for this force to aid him : he requires them as the encouragement to friendship, as counsel to his wisdom, as an example to copy, to approve of what he likes, and from a dread of blame. There is not a person who cannot produce in his own case a thousand proofs of this movement of a soul seeking out of itself an aid to its own freedom, which it feels to be at once real and insufficient. And, as the visible world and human society do not respond always to his wishes, as they are infected with the same insufficiency which he finds in himself, the mind goes beyond the visible world and above human relations, for the support which it needs. The religious sentiment developes itself, and man addresses to God, and calls Him to his succour. Prayer is the most elevated, though it is not the only form under which there is manifested this universal sentiment of the feebleness of human will,—this recourse to an exterior force to which it may unite.”—*Guizot*.

“Wherever there is a Christian there is properly the Holy Ghost, who does nothing but pray continually. For, though he does not continually open his mouth or utter words, yet his heart, like the pulse and heart of his body, is necessarily beating in sighs ; so that one can no more find a Christian without prayer, than a living man without pulse, which never rests, but beats continually of itself, even when the man is asleep.”—*Luther*.



CHAPTER IX.

HUMAN POWER IN PRAYER.

“There is none that calleth upon Thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee : for Thou hast hid Thy face from us.”—*Isa.* lxiv. 7.

“Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye Pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”—*Mark* xi. 24.

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children : how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him ?”—*Luke* xi. 13.

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities : for we know not what we should pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”—*Rom.* viii. 26.

“I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.”—*1 Cor.* xiv. 15.

“I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”—*1 Tim.* ii. 8.

“The effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”—*James* v. 16.


THE prominence given to Prayer, both in the Old and New Testament, proves its great importance. Repentance, Faith, Conversion, Sanctifica-

tion, and Perfection can only influence and form our Christian character, in the degree in which we understand them, and express to God our thoughts and feelings respecting them. Even Preaching will only become powerful when united with fervent prayer. Our thoughts, emotions, and volitions, only become godly as they raise us above ourselves, into holy communion with God. Prayer is the most elevated state of thought and feeling of which the mind is susceptible, rising infinitely higher than the highest imagination of the poet or the thought of the philosopher, and so elevating the thoughts and affections of the mind as to bring them into harmony and intercourse with God Himself.

SECTION I.

PRAYER IN RELATION TO THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

We cannot conceive of the Christian Life and the moral Government of God without Prayer. Our whole existence depends upon a series of changes, which bring us into contact with new difficulties, temptations, dangers, labours, disappointments, etc., extorting the constant cry for



help from some being greater than ourselves : and no power can satisfy us but the Infinite. There are so many wants which only God can supply, so many perplexities which only His wisdom can relieve, so many sorrows which only His comfort can cheer, so many sins which only His sovereign mercy can pardon, that the mind cannot rest until it reposes in Him—"The source and centre of all minds, the only point of rest," the Great First Cause of all things.

Moreover, there is a higher view than even this in connection with Prayer. There has been a utilitarian view of Prayer, which has tended to detract from its elevation. It is regarded by many from a purely selfish point of view, and God is contemplated in no higher aspect than the source of our daily supply of the things most necessary for us. Amidst our weakness, ignorance, and sinfulness, our sense of dependence upon God must powerfully influence us in Prayer. But, whilst it is right to pray for our daily bread, the great design of Prayer is to associate it with our Father in heaven, so as to bring us into perfect fellowship with Him. The primary objects of Prayer are Worship, Adoration, Communion with the Infinite Spirit, as the means of assimilation to Him. He does not

make our daily bread dependent upon Prayers, inasmuch as He gives enough to spare to those who never pray. He, however, not only says to those who pray, thy bread shall be given and thy water shall be sure—in this sense of dependence upon Him from day to day the assurance of the supply of our needs—but uses it as the means of immediate connection with His universal Fatherhood, employs even temporal mercies as channels of spiritual communication. Every exercise of the mind, every relationship in life, every experience of comfort, every object of pleasure, was intended to awaken in the soul heavenly harmony. The susceptibility of the mind was intended for devotion, just as every chord of an instrument is formed for music, and God, even through self-love, makes melody in the heart, rising to pure adoration.

We may deny the theory of Prayer, but we cannot cease to pray. We may refuse to acknowledge God, or even to acknowledge Him as revealed in His Holy Word, but we cannot suppress the intense longings of the heart for the Infinite. All men alike are created with this desire. The Atheist himself must admit that He has a nature which only God can satisfy.

and, whilst he denies the existence of the true God, he is compelled, in spite of himself, to sigh for some infinite ideal which the necessities of his nature create. Like the Athenians, he must erect an altar *to the unknown God whom he ignorantly worships.*

All men alike pray ; but all men do not pray *with the Spirit and with the understanding* : few are willing *to ask according to God's Will.* It seems sad, amidst all the sighs and groans of humanity, that so few will go for relief to the *Source of every good and perfect gift.* If the energy wasted in fruitless longings after some imaginary good could but be expended in earnest and sincere Prayer to God, the cries of misery around us must at once cease. One day of universal Prayer would usher in the world's jubilee. *Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

Prayer is the necessary condition of a dependent and sinful creature. Our infinite desires gravitate towards God, like the planets towards the sun. Give the mind everything but the Infinite, it will ask for more. Whatever repelling influences a corrupt world has thrown around man's sinful nature, whatever may be the aliena-

tion of his guilty conscience from God, still, *out of the depths he must cry to Him*; and he declares by his restlessness and agony that he is, when *without God, without hope in the world*. This is an inexorable law, arising from the relation of man to his Maker. Our happiness depends upon God, as much as the stream upon the fountain. The many expedients which the wisest of men have tried to find as substitutes for God, afford the strongest proofs that man was created for fellowship with his Creator. That God has reserved our highest happiness to be derived immediately from Himself, is one of His highest acts of goodness; and Prayer is the medium by which the mind passes from the natural to the supernatural, by which all the active powers of the mind are brought into active fellowship with the mind of the Infinite Father of humanity.

Some have contended that Prayer involves principles which are opposed to the nature of God, which detract from the Divine Perfection, and which impugn His Omniscience and Immutability. But would it show any greater perfection in God if it could be proved that, by some immutable decree, He had completely arranged all the contingencies of human life, that its

most minute incidents were inexorably decreed, than to show that a sigh would reach His ear, and that *the effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous man availeth much*?

Would it heighten our views of an earthly parent, if, in his loftiness, he could never condescend to the request of his child? Is it not one of the beautiful features of a household, that, whilst there are certain fixed principles of paternal government which cannot change, these are of such a nature as to allow so completely for contingencies, that there can be the cultivation of the most perfect affections, and the gratification of the purest desires? and is not this the grandest view of the Divine Fatherhood? Whilst there are unchangeable principles in His government, whilst *with Him there is no variableness nor shadow of turning*, still He is in most perfect harmony with Himself when most attentively hearing, and most largely granting, the Prayers of His children.

It must, however, be admitted that there are difficulties in understanding the method of Prayer which are incomprehensible; but the laws by which God answers Prayer are not more difficult to comprehend than the laws of cause and effect in the Physical Sciences and in

the Philosophy of the Human Mind : the alike mysteries which their great Creator has been pleased to conceal from our gaze, whilst the Eternal Fountains of Divine Grace are hidden in the great purposes of the Divine Government, the channels by which the streams flow forth to us are perfectly intelligible, and we know no more than this in relation to Nature. The fact that God *does* answer Prayer, and the *conditions* by which He answers Prayer, are as familiar to the mind as the laws by which the river flows along the valley.

Few would suppose that it is impossible for God to answer Prayer. The general objection to it is, that it is a contradiction of the laws of physical and mental science. But we are not bound to account for Prayer on the principle of Philosophy, because it belongs to a part of the Divine Government which has not been fully revealed to us. It is so intimately connected with the supernatural that we possess no data by which we can reduce its laws to a system. Every truth is necessarily involved in greater mystery as we emerge from the natural into the supernatural. All our communications to God must become more profound

they become more spiritual, because it is so much greater to be immediately connected with God Himself than with His works. Our relations, however, to the Infinite are not less real because they are incomprehensible. On the contrary, the grandeur of our relation to God increases with the thought that, much as God has made known to us, we have only entered upon the borders of the Infinite.

Dr. Chalmers supposes that there may be a law of cause and effect in Prayer, as in the physical universe. There may be a connection between Prayer and its answer, similar to that between moral actions and character. We cannot get near to Infinite Love without feeling its warmth and purity. Prayer is inestimable for even the reflex influence that it has upon the mind. But this is taking the lowest ground, and cuts us off from immediate intercourse with God as a Personal Father. This removes Prayer from the concrete to the abstract, from experience to inference, and makes it rather mechanical than spiritual. Our character can only be influenced by God in the degree that we are brought into conscious personal intercourse with Him; and in Prayer God is brought near enough to us to make us sensible of His

presence, at the same time we feel that it is the presence of the Infinite, near enough to breathe in us His life, but in every breath we feel that it is *the inspiration of the Almighty giving us understanding*.


Is there not sufficient variety in the modes of the Divine operation to lead us to suppose that God could uniformly act in answer to Prayer as consistently with the principles of moral law as with physical law? Is it a greater reason for the Divine action that He has established certain laws of cause and effect in nature, than that some faithful child should ask something, *according to His Will*, in connection with the great scheme of Redemption? Is there not as great a reason for complying with *the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man* as for the continuance of the operation of fixed law? Why should God be bound more by the law of Necessity than the law of Contingency?

The greatest difficulty is felt to exist when Prayer would require for its answer the suspension of the natural order of things, or the violation of fundamental principles. For example, we pray for the removal of disease; for suitable weather; for success in battle. It is said that disease and the weather are subject to certain

established laws, and that "success in battle is always on the side of the strongest battalions," and is it likely that God's uniform laws will be contravened by the most earnest supplications of men? But we must ever remember that all God's laws are subordinate to His Providential Government, and that all physical laws are secondary to the great purposes of Redemption.

It is said that the Prayer of Faith shall save the sick; at the same time it is affirmed that certain diseases are the result of the neglect of those sanitary measures which influence health, and which are under the control of man. Action, it is thought, is of greater importance than Prayer in such cases. But one of God's answers to Prayer would be to guide to the best means of action. Do we not in every great epidemic consult the best authorities? is not our confidence increased, in the removal of disease, by the skill of the physician? How great, then, to be able to consult some infallible mind! and we have this mind in God. Every law of Nature is subject to Him, and is under His control.

The same law exists in relation to the weather. Certain degrees of heat, cold, and moisture, produce corresponding effects. Rains and winds, frost and snow, summer and winter, produce uniform




results. Yet who can calculate what the next season will be, whether wet or dry, hot or cold, barren or fruitful? Is there not, then, in these varieties of temperature, sufficient scope for the exercise of Prayer, notwithstanding our belief in the fixedness of physical law? May not a season have been modified by the Prayers of God's people?

The same principle holds good in reference to the battle-field. *The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.* Upon how many contingencies may victory depend! upon skill in arrangement, upon coolness and presence of mind in some great emergency, upon time, place, etc., which may decide the destinies of nations. How often has the conquest depended more upon the general than the soldiers! What, then, must be the advantage of the commander who has access to Infinite Wisdom! *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.* On the other hand, how easily can God confound the counsel of wicked men! We must never forget that He who made the laws of Nature ordained also the laws of Prayer, and that it was the omniscient God, who beheld through all ages the sequences

which would operate in Matter and in Mind, who said, *Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

To deny that God has suspended the ordinary action of His laws in answer to Prayer is to deny a great part of the Bible. The names of Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Hezekiah, Elijah, Daniel, Peter, Paul, and Silas, are enough to suggest to us scenes in which all the elements of Nature have been brought into subordination to this higher supernatural law. What necessity can there be for God to enforce any physical law when there is some moral reason for its suspension? Take for example the case of Paul and Silas. Was it of greater importance that God should be bound by the uniform action of locks and keys than that He should act according to that higher principle by which a Holy God is bound to vindicate the honour of a holy man?

With many the greatest difficulty seems to be presented in reference to Intercessory Prayer. It is no doubt more difficult to understand how God can act upon a mind that is alienated from Him, than a mind that is in harmony with His Will. It is true that, in connection with a free being, God can only act in accordance with



the laws of moral agency. But do we not act upon the principle of Intercession every day? Are we not constantly bestowing favours, not for the sake of the recipient, but for the sake of some one else? Do we not frequently bestow some kindness to the undeserving because some friend has requested it? The recipient of our favour might carp, and wonder that we need some intercession, but is it not enough that he is in possession of the favour? If God is pleased to bless a wicked master for the sake of a godly servant, it is not for the master to complain of the law; and never, until the day when all secrets shall be revealed, will it be known how much, in nations, in Churches, in families, depended upon the Intercessions of the righteous. It is one of the great principles of Intercession that we receive all the blessings of Redemption. It is through the mediation of Jesus Christ, through the merit of His Infinite Sacrifice, that all the blessings of a Redeemed World flow forth to us; and, in the same manner, Christ has conferred this great gift upon His disciples. *Though poor, we can make many rich by our prayers; having nothing, we can possess all things for ourselves and others by our prayers; whilst the pestilence walketh in*


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darkness, and the destruction wasteth at noonday, baffling all human skill, we may rush between the living and the dead, and the greatest plague may be stayed, by the incense of Prayer. Who is it that finds the greatest difficulties in Prayer? Not the Christian who lives in the habit of Prayer; not the high-priest who enters the Holy of Holies by the blood of sprinkling, and communes with the God of Israel from above the mercy-seat; but the outer-court worshipper who has never ventured within the veil. The true saint who continues instant in prayer has proved what he is more anxious to know than everything else: he has proved that God's eyes are ever over the righteous, and His ears are ever open to his prayers; he has proved that, when he has asked bread, God has not given a stone, and when he has asked fish, He has not given a serpent; but that whatsoever he has asked according to His will He has granted.

SECTION II.

PRAYER AS INFLUENCED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

It is of importance to man to know what is not as well as what is required of him in the




exercise of Prayer. Whilst the Bible teaches that man must put forth the power which he possesses, it also teaches, with an emphasis which shows its great importance, that we need the Spirit's help. It is not said that we cannot pray without His aid, but that *we know not what to pray for as we ought*; and that we can only ask according to God's will when *the Spirit helpeth our infirmities with groanings which cannot be uttered*. Our success in prayer will depend upon our knowledge of its Conditions. It would be more reasonable for God to dispense with Prayer altogether than to answer the Prayer that is opposed to His Will. It is certain that, whilst some Prayers are pleasing in His sight, others are an abomination to Him; and, therefore, some prevail, and others are rejected.

Whilst Prayer operates through human faculties, it is a spiritual exercise, and there can be no true Prayer apart from the influence of the Holy Spirit. True Prayer is the consciousness of want which only God can satisfy; and this want is felt by the operations of the Holy Spirit upon the mind, inspiring it with holy desire, and teaching us to express that desire *according to His will*. Prayer is really the expression of the

heart under the drawings of God towards Himself. Our sinful natures need some power holier than themselves, to enable them to enter into the true spirit of devotion. Guilty man shrinks from the purity of God, and cannot, without the aid of the Divine Advocate within him, hold fellowship with the Infinitely Holy One. In the degree in which he feels his guilt—like Adam—he will shrink from God's presence, and seek to hide himself. We should never come to God if left to ourselves. There is a certain downward momentum to overcome before we can rise to God, which only the Holy Spirit can counteract. No one seemed more sensible of the need of that help than the apostle Paul.

Much is said in the Bible about unsuccessful prayer. *We have not, because we ask not. We ask, and receive not, because we ask amiss, that we may consume it upon our lusts.* Prayer is the expression of the desires which the Spirit inspires, rather than of our own. The natural desires of the mind are to gratify *self*, and only the Holy Spirit can raise these desires to God. The tendency of our carnal mind is the gratification of the flesh. If left alone, and God answered our Prayers, we should sink lower and



lower, until we became *earthly, sensual, devilish*. But the Holy Spirit elevates human thought and affection to the Divine life, and, moving us to set our affections on things above, whilst *our souls cleave to the dust*, by *praying in the Holy Ghost, we are quickened according to His Word*.

Nothing could be so great a misfortune to a child as to have all his desires granted: and this is especially true of the child of God. It would be a curse to us if our Heavenly Father consulted our Will instead of His Own All-perfect Will; but *the Spirit maketh Intercession for us according to the Will of God*. The Word of God lays down general principles, but their application to our individual necessities depends upon the immediate action of the Spirit. He shows us our sinfulness, and the efficacy of the blood of Christ; our weakness, and the strength of Christ; our condemnation, and the righteousness of Christ; our misery, and the comfort in Christ; our despair, and our hope in Christ; and this with such clearness and force as so strongly draws our desires to Him, that, fallen and weak as man is, spiritual Prayer becomes the most natural exercise. But, whilst it is so easy to pray with the Spirit's help, the spirit in man can no more rise to God without the Spirit's power

than the eagle can fly without the atmosphere. When, however, the soul rises by the Spirit's help, it can *mount up as on the wings of eagles*, and *sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus*.

How complete are all the arrangements of Divine Providence in the adaptations of the Spirit's work to man's nature. There is the same perfection in the provisions of Grace as we see in Nature. The atmosphere is suited as perfectly to the insect as to the eagle, and gravitation to the atom as to the world; and, in the abounding grace of Christ, provision is made for the weakest as well as the strongest soul that draws near to Him. The feeblest effort of the soul, in dependence upon the Spirit's power, will enable us to *draw near to the throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*.

Thus the Divine life throughout its successive stages is dependent upon Prayer. The penitent desires are of no avail, until they are expressed to God. Faith can only bring us to God, and unite us to Him, as our beliefs become Prayers. No spiritual change can take place in us until we are brought into fellowship with the All-quickenings Spirit. Sanctification can be experienced only by communion with the Holy Spirit;

and perfect love can be obtained only by living in the conscious presence of the God of infinite love. Thus, the perfection of our Prayers depends upon the perfection of the Divine life. We may offer the Prayer of the penitent, the Prayer of weak or strong faith, the Prayer of the newborn child of God or the father in Israel, the Prayer of the sanctified mind, or the Prayer of perfect love. It may at the first rise but little above mere self-love; but, as we attain to perfect love, as we love God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves, our Prayers may blend into pure adoration to God and pure benevolence to man.

SECTION III.

PRAYER AS A NATURAL HUMAN EXERCISE.

Prayer can be a condition of Providential Government only in so far as it is natural to us. It is only through the natural that we can rise into the spiritual; and in the exercise of Prayer God has not implanted any new principle within us, but has called into exercise what has already existed. Nothing is more natural to us than to pray; and when God is revealed to us it is as easy to pray to Him as to make request of man.

It was necessary that the starting-point in the Divine life should be the simplest possible in connection with human nature. When we have thought, felt, and wept, over sin and misery, we want some mode of access to God ; and, as soon as we begin to pray, believingly, we feel that we have discovered this mode and gained this access. We have found the key to *the fulness of riches in glory by Christ Jesus* in the precious words : *If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him ?* In the Holy Spirit is included every good and perfect gift ; and in the sense of His presence we merge human weakness into Divine strength, so as to make all things possible to us. By the operation of the indwelling Spirit, the mind wakes up to the distinct consciousness of its real state in relation to God, and its need of Redemption ; and the condition upon which He comes to the human heart, or that we rise to the consciousness that He is already there, is to ask Him. There must be some condition : nothing can be more simple than this ; and, to those who pray, this gift is bestowed with the willingness of the Infinite Father.

Every man can think, and every man who thinks can pray ; and *every one that asketh receiveth*. We require only the Bible, to know enough of ourselves and Christ, to begin to pray. No one can understand the blessings of Salvation without feeling their desirableness ; and the least spark of desire is sufficient for the Spirit to enkindle the flame of devotion. We naturally long for the highest attainable good ; and no man can know God without beholding in Him the highest object of desire. Hence, with every step of advancement in the Divine life, we find new objects of desire, until the whole soul *longs and thirsts after God* ; and we shall *rejoice evermore* when we *pray without ceasing*. No change has taken place in us, except that our natural longings after the highest good have now found a repose in the Infinite Source of all good, and have been influenced in prayer to the attainment of that good. The Spirit is at all times brooding over our nature's night ; but in Prayer we become conscious of His operations, and respond to His heavenly voice.

The Bible recognizes Prayer as an exercise perfectly under our own control ; and, instead of condemning persistence in Prayer as presumption, God rewards the most persevering


Prayer as the highest virtue. See, for example, Abraham, supplicating for the doomed cities of Sodom and Gomorrah ; *Jacob, wrestling until he prevails* ; Moses, pleading with God for sinful Israel. The Lord saying, *Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man.* Elijah's Prayer locks and unlocks heaven ; the Prayers of Paul and Silas shake the earth ; and the most eminent saints in the several ages of the world have been those who have been most persevering in Prayer.

The question has been frequently asked : Is the age of miracles past ? It seems difficult to give a correct answer. It seems from the Bible that some miracles can only be performed by *Prayer and Fasting*. We find a close connection between the active development of the Spiritual Life, the subjugation of the Corporeal Life, and the working of miracles. All the prophets led that life—the life of Prayer, Fasting, and Solitude. It was pre-eminently the life of Jesus, who retired to the mountains, deserts, by-places, and spent whole nights in Prayer. We must be quite sure that we have among us men leading the lives of the workers of miracles before we are warranted in saying the age of

miracles is past. God still hears Prayer; and, whilst there is no limit to His power in answering it, who can say that holy men, as holy, offering Prayer in Faith, as great, might not receive answers equally wonderful?

All things are possible to man, because God has promised all things in answer to Prayer; and all the conditions of Prayer are under his control. It requires sincerity, and every man can be sincere; fixedness of purpose, and every man can concentrate his thoughts; forgiveness of those who trespass against us, and we see men every day forgiving; earnestness, and every man can be earnest; importunity, and every man can be importunate. With what intensity the criminal will plead for mercy! with what importunity the mother will plead for the life of her child, or the wife for that of her husband! and we possess the same power in pleading with God, if we only realized our true relation to Him. The power by which we grasp the finite will also grasp the Infinite.

A fatal mistake in Prayer is, that we connect it with the Sensibility rather than the Intelligence and the Will: consequently, we are governed solely by our feelings, and, therefore, can very seldom pray. How often we say that



we are not in the spirit of Prayer. We forget that Prayer was intended to excite devotional feeling as well as to express it. The stronger our disinclination to pray, the greater need we have of Prayer. But little seamanship is required in fine weather ; it is amidst headwinds, rocks, or whirlpools, that the greatest fortitude is required ; and it is the same in relation to Prayer. There are times when the mind is alienated from God, when we have to force ourselves to our knees before Him, when the most tremendous under-currents seem to carry us away from His presence. But it is then that we have most need to pray, and to exercise an invincible determination ; for it is then that we are in the greatest danger. God estimates our Prayers, not so much by their strength of feeling as by their calm patience, by their holy resolution, by their acquiescence in the Divine Will, by their confidence in the Divine promises, and by their firm conviction that God, in His own time, will hear and answer them.

We often overlook the primary object of Prayer. We contemplate it solely from a selfish point of view. We think that God is good, just in the degree in which He grants our

desires ; whilst one great object of Prayer is to regulate our desires according to the Will of God. It is not that the man of Prayer receives so much more of temporal good than the man who never prays—he may not receive as much; but the man who never prays can only receive according to his own will, whilst the man who prays receives according to the Will of God. Of what use is it to Pray, it is often asked, when God refuses to give what we ask ? How often we seem to receive the very reverse of our Prayer. Is it a small thing, to receive according to God's Will instead of our own ? We ask for wealth—Infinite Wisdom chooses for us poverty. Is it not enough, that God has chosen it ? We ask for health—God gives us affliction. Is it not enough that it is His Will that we should suffer ? We ask for the life of our child—He has taken him to His own bosom. Is it not enough, that He has taken him ? Surely, that cannot be best for us that is opposed to the Will of our Father in heaven!

But, when we have attained to perfect love, we must receive what we desire, because all our desires must then be in accordance with the Will of God. It is only in our selfish desires

that God is compelled to disappoint us. It is only when *we ask amiss, that we may consume it upon our lusts, that we ask and receive not*. As our desires rise from selfishness to pure benevolence, they harmonize with the will of Infinite Love. It is easy, then, to pray; it is easy, then, to say, *Not my will, but Thine be done*; it is easy, then, to *walk with God, and have the testimony that we please Him*.

It is well for us to remember what God has *not* promised, as well as what He *has* promised. There are limitations over which we have no control. We pray, for example, for the conversion of sinners. A wife prays for the conversion of her husband, or a mother prays for the conversion of her child; and, perhaps, for many years they go on in sin, or, perhaps, never evince any change at the last. Of what use has it been to pray? We believe that the cases are very rare in which earnest, believing, persevering Prayer is offered, when our motive is the glory of God, and not merely the gratification of some selfish desire, or merely the increase of our own happiness, in which our prayers are not answered, in the conversion of those for whom we pray. We may not always know the answer; but, in the day of secrets,

it will prove that multitudes who have been followed at every step of life by the prayers of the godly have been saved. We must ever remember that Prayer is a moral influence, and it is no part of the work of Redemption to force the sinner to turn to God—if such a thing in a moral being were conceivable—but to use means to influence his mind; and sometimes it is only the punishment of a course of sin that can make the prodigal return. Frequently, in some great affliction, the sinner comes to himself; but that affliction would have had no effect upon him at an earlier state of his sinful career. Or sometimes, even at death itself, the long-continued Prayer of Faith is answered respecting him. Whilst it is possible for the sinner to resist the influence of the prayers of the most godly, such is the grace that must follow him continually, in answer to Prayer, that there is every reason to believe that, sooner or later, he will be saved.

We pray, also, for the restoration of the sick. It is said that *the Prayer of Faith shall save the sick*; but frequently those for whom we most earnestly pray never recover. Is it, then, in vain to pray for the sick? We have many instances on record in which it is evident that God


has answered Prayer, in which, whilst Prayer has been offered, the answer has come, and the patient himself has been conscious of a change; but, in quite as many instances, the most valuable lives, in spite of every effort, have passed away. There is much in connection with this subject which we cannot understand, because we cannot understand the relation of the present world to the next, or of the present time to the future. There is, however, enough revealed to encourage us to pray for the sick and the afflicted. There is every reason to believe that God will, if possible, restore the sick in answer to the Prayer of the godly; but God may see, in many instances, that it would not be good for the patient himself, or for the world generally, that he should recover. Where there is no stronger reason against it, it is sufficient reason on the part of our Father in heaven, that it is the request of His loving children; and, no doubt, many have been raised up for the reason that it is the *effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous man* that has requested it. We act upon the same principle every day in human life; and this principle is one of the great manifestations of the Divine Fatherhood.

It has been asked, If God can give those things



in answer to Prayer, why not without it? Would it not be a greater display of His benevolence, to do everything for us without being asked to do it? But, as moral beings, we must have some condition. It would cease to be Moral Government, if it had no regard to the principles of the human mind; and in the exercise of Prayer God has chosen the simplest possible condition for a moral agent. In the Mediatorial Government of Jesus Christ, God has conferred upon all who are in harmony with it the power to intercede for those whom He has redeemed; and, whilst He is *the Great High Priest passed into the heavens*, He has made us, by *the washing of His precious blood, kings and priests unto God and His Father*; so that *whatsoever we ask in His name, as touching the kingdom, He will grant*.

We want more Prayer. Great efforts are put forth by the Church of Christ for good, but without commensurate results. We have not had too much effort, but we have had too little Prayer. God hides Himself from us, because there are so few who stir themselves to take hold of Him. We have been waiting passively for some one to move us, when God has been exhorting us to put forth the power which He



has already given us. We have been assuming the want of Divine Power, when the great want has been the exercise of human power. Whilst we need the Spirit's help, He can only help those who will themselves pray with all their heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. The world is dark, because the Church will not pray for light. The kingdom of Christ does not come, and His will is not done on earth as it is in heaven, for want of Prayer. The Church itself languishes, because the voice of Prayer is so seldom heard. Sinners are perishing, because *no man careth for their soul*. Christ complained that His disciples *asked so little in His name*. He exhorts us to *ask and to receive, that our joy may be full*; and the degree to which men wait, to be stirred up or to *stir themselves up, to take hold of God*, will ever be their degree of Christian attainment and of Christian usefulness.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

“Yes, Thou art ever present, Power Supreme !
Not circumscribed by time, nor fix’d by space,
Confined to altars, nor to temples bound ;
In wealth, in want, in freedom or in chains,
In dungeons or on thrones, the faithful find Thee.”—

Hannah More.

“One part, one little part, we dimly scan,
Through the dark medium of life’s feverish dream ;
Yet dare arraign the whole stupendous plan
If but one little part incongruous seem.”—

Beattie.

“O, Eternal Providence, whose course
Amidst the various maze of life is fixed
By boundless wisdom and by boundless love,
I follow thee with resignation, hope,
With confidence and joy, for Thou art good,
And of Thy rising goodness is no end.”—

Thomson.

“Ye who live,
Do so each cause refer to Heaven above,
Even as its motion, of necessity,
Drew with it all that moves. If this were so,
True choice in you were none ; nor justice would
There should be joy for virtue, love for ill.”—

Dante.

“God worketh nothing in nature but by second causes ; and if they would have it otherwise believed, it is mere imposture, as it were in favour towards God, and nothing else but to offer to the Author of truth the unclean sacrifice of a lie. But, further, it is an assured truth, of a conclusion of experience, that a little or superficial knowledge of philosophy may incline the man to atheism, but a further proceeding therein doth bring the mind back again to religion ; for in the entrance of philosophy, when the second causes which are next unto the senses do offer themselves to the mind of man, if it dwell and stay there, it may induce some oblivion of the highest cause ; but, when a man passeth on further, and seeth the dependence of causes, and the works of Providence, then, according to the allegory of the poets, he will easily believe that the highest of Nature’s chain must be tied to the foot of Jupiter’s chair.”—*Bacon*.

“There is a higher government of men, as moral and religious beings, which is carried on chiefly by means of the fortuities of life. Those unforeseen accidents which so often control the lot of men, constitute a *superstratum* in the system of human affairs, wherein, peculiarly, the Divine Providence holds empire for the accomplishment of its special purposes. It is from this hidden and inexhaustible mine of chances—chances, as we must call them—that the Governor of the world draws, with unfathomable skill, the material of His dispensation towards each individual of mankind.”—*Isaac Taylor*.

CHAPTER X.

HUMAN POWER IN RELATION TO PROVIDENCE.

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof ; the world, and they that dwell therein."—*Ps.* xxiv. 1.

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness : and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."—*Gen.* i. 26.

"The Lord killeth, and maketh alive : He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich : He bringeth low, and lifteth up."—*1 Sam.* ii. 6, 7.

"With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful ; with an upright man Thou wilt show Thyself upright."—*Ps.* xviii. 25.

"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on."—*Matt.* vi. 25.

"If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."—*1 Tim.* v. 8.

"Casting all your care upon Him ; for He careth for you."—*1 Pet.* v. 7.

"The hand of the diligent maketh rich."—*Prov.* x. 4.

EVERY theory of the Divine Life would be incomplete without the consideration of Divine Providence. We are so much influenced by the circumstances in which we are placed—by the changes, difficulties, sufferings, and conflicts, of human life—that consideration of the Christian life, without a knowledge of Providential Government, would be like study of the theory of war without reference to battles past or anticipations of future action. The Spiritual Life is immediately connected with the daily activities of the natural life, and we cannot understand our true relation to God without knowing clearly our true relation to man. The world of Matter furnishes most of the material for the action of the world of Mind, and we must have an intelligent acquaintance with things temporal if we would fully comprehend the things that are eternal.

SECTION I.

ADAPTATIONS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE TO BODY, SOUL, AND SPIRIT.

There is evidence of Design in all the works of God. From the greatest to the smallest objects of creation, everything combines to make one complete whole, forming the accom-

plishment of a vast plan of Infinite Wisdom, Power, and Goodness. There are everywhere, not only Typical Forms, but also Special Ends, in creation. The most insignificant agencies in the works of God are necessary to the perfecting of the whole scheme. Like the various parts of the human eye, each part having a necessary relation to the perfect organ of vision, so every part of God's works forms a necessary element in the grandeur and perfection of the whole universe.

God's works would be inferior to the works of man if they had not some ultimate end, commensurate with the power and wisdom bestowed upon them. In the formation and configuration of the Crust of the Earth there are evident marks of a Designing Mind, and of a Plan which has reference to beings capable of understanding and working out the Divine Purposes. Nothing in the material world seems to be an end great enough for the means employed, but everything points to some grand consummation worthy of all the forces in operation. We consider it an evidence of weakness in men to engage in any pursuit without an object commensurate to the strength and wisdom expended : therefore, in creation we naturally look for the accomplish-

ment of a scheme worthy of the Almighty Creator. Do we not find in man a being who can appropriate the infinite resources of the Creator, who is perfectly adapted to everything, and to whom everything is perfectly adapted?

“The greater our progress in the study of the economy of Nature, the more she unveils as one vast whole, one comprehensive plan, one universal rule, in a yet unexhausted series of individual peculiarities. Such is the aspect of the moving, working, living system of force and law; such it has ever been, if we rightly interpret the history of our own portion of this rich inheritance of mind, the history of that Earth from which we spring, with which so many of our thoughts are co-ordinated, and to which all but our thoughts and hopes will return.” . . . “How instructive the history of that long series of inhabitants which secured in primitive times the gift of life, and filled the land, sea, and air, with rejoicing myriads, through innumerable revolutions of this planet, before, in the fulness of time, it pleased the Giver of all good to place man upon the earth, and bid him look up to heaven.”¹

¹ Phillips' Address to the British Association.

Man's appearance upon earth solves its mystery, and completes its design. We see in him a reason for the glories of the heavens above, and for the treasures of the earth beneath : —*the heavens declaring to man the glory of God, and the firmament showing His handiwork. Day unto day uttering speech, and night unto night showing knowledge.* In the treasures of earth—its rocks, coal, iron, copper, silver, gold, gases, electricity, trees, fruits, flowers, and springs, we discover the development, through myriads of ages, of God's plans for the greatness and happiness of man. With man it becomes a scene of light, of beauty, of intelligence, of love ; but, without man, a scene of blank unmeaning materialism, out of harmony with the attributes of the Divine Governor of the Universe. What grandeur is given to human nature by the great fact that man is made the possessor and ruler of this world ! The language of Pope, though intended as an exaggeration, is nothing but sober reality, when he writes :—

“ For me kind Nature wakes her genial power,
Suckles each herb, and spreads out every flower ;
Annual for me the grape, the rose, renew
Their juice nectarious and the morning dew.

For me the mine a thousand treasures brings ;
For me health gushes from a thousand springs ;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise ;
My footstool earth, my canopy the skies."

There is the same adaptation in the design of God's works to all the requirements of the Soul. There is everything in the arrangements of Divine Providence to awaken the Intellect, to excite the Sensibility, and to constitute the condition of the action of the Will. Every object in nature was formed for the Soul as well as for the Body, and tends to awaken the inner as well as the outer sense. How suggestive is the smallest flower, the tiniest dewdrop, the minutest insect, as well as the rose of Sharon, the cedar of Lebanon, the vast ocean, the heaven above, and the cattle upon a thousand hills! Also, what can be more beautiful than those instincts and laws which bind society together? How marvellous are those laws which unite husband and wife, parent and child, king and country! How great the happiness arising from the harmonies of the various relations of human life! Even from the most unfavourable circumstances of life, we often see the greatest achievements of the mind, and the greatest social and national perfection; and

under all circumstances there is evidence that *God's tender mercies are over all His works.*

There is the same provision for the wants of man's Spiritual Nature. In entering upon this subject we have forced upon us one of the greatest problems in the universe—a problem around which all Providential Government must revolve—namely, the Introduction into our world of Moral Evil. It seems presumptuous to attempt to explain this mystery, after the unsuccessful attempts of some of the greatest minds of the past. We do not approach this subject with any conceit of superior Mental Power; but in the belief that truth is no respecter of persons, and that, like its Author, it will reveal itself to those who love it, whether great or small. “The tiny dew-drop will often reflect the light more clearly than the great ocean.” The ordinary mind will often discover truth more clearly than minds of greater expansion. Minds disturbed and distracted by human speculation will often fail to detect harmonies of truth which will present themselves almost intuitively to the simple lover of truth. All truth is simple when God simplifies it; and, whilst often it is *withheld from the wise and prudent, it is revealed unto babes.*

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Moreover, the lover of truth in the present day is in a position to understand the Mystery of Evil better than the great men who have written upon it in the past. Such men as Augustine, Hobbes, Leibnitz, and Edwards, were beclouded by a false Philosophy, and bewildered by a still more false Theology. Each supported some particular theory, so false as to neutralize every effort to arrive at the truth, and, when it was impossible to harmonize the false Philosophy with their false Theology, they naturally thought that both were involved in impenetrable mystery, which it were almost impiety to attempt to understand. The infidel writers on this subject could but have gained an easy victory. Like every physical theory of the universe before the discovery of the laws of Gravitation, there was no true principle. The ablest writers on this subject started from the lofty height of abstractions, instead of investigating actual facts. They built castles in the air, and then wondered that they had no rock for their foundation.

The attempts of the past have generally been to reconcile the Introduction of Moral Evil, not with the Freedom of the Will, but with the doctrine of Necessity, which is an impossi-

bility. Augustine, Luther, Calvin,—all denied the Freedom of the Will. Hobbes allowed it only the same that the river has when it is unobstructed. Locke held substantially the same view. Edwards differed only in his phraseology. The utmost freedom which they would allow to the mind was to subject the volition to the strongest motive, which is really only to shift the cause a little farther back ; for there is practically no difference in being necessitated by motive and being necessitated by any other cause. Even Dr. M'Cosh, who, when not trammelled by the difficulties of the school to which he belongs, has written, perhaps, the most satisfactory treatise extant on the Divine Government, has fallen unconsciously into the error to which we have referred.

He says: "There is an essential freedom implied in every proper exercise of the Will. For the proof of this we appeal to consciousness,—the universal consciousness. . . . When it is said that the Will is free, there is more declared than simply that we can do what we please. It is implied, further, that the choice lies within the voluntary power of the mind, and that we could have willed otherwise if we had pleased. The mind has not only the power

of action, but the anterior and far more important power of choice. The freedom of the mind does not consist in the effect following the volition—as, for instance, in the movement of the arm following the will to move it—but in the power of the mind to form the volition in the exercise of its voluntary functions. That man has not scanned the full phenomena of consciousness, who denies the inherent power of the mind, not only to act as it chooses, but to form its own independent choice. In making this choice we are no doubt swayed by considerations, but these have their force given to them by the Will itself, which may set a high value upon them, but which may, if it please, set them at defiance.”¹

Nothing could be more clear and distinct than these views; at the same time, nothing could be more opposed to the school which claims Dr. M'Cosh as its representative. We are, however, startled to find, only two pages beyond the passage just quoted, the following explanation of what he means. He says: “While we stand up for the free exercise of the Will as an independent faculty, we maintain, at

¹ “Method of Divine Government,” p. 271, 8th ed.

the same time, that it has laws by which it is regulated. For proof of this, we refer to man's intuitive principles, which declare that the laws of cause and effect reign in the Will, and in regard to the responsible acts of man, as it does in every other department of the mind, and indeed in every other department of God's works.

. . . We hold that every particular act of the Will, as phenomenon commencing to exist, must have a cause. If it be said that the cause lies in the Human Will itself, we go back to that Human Will, and insist that it, too, as a phenomenon, must have a cause of its operations, and the mode of it. It is by an intuition of our nature, that we are constrained, on the occurrence of phenomena, to believe in the existence of a cause. But we are not led by any such principle to deny that the phenomena of the Will have a cause."

This last quotation seems a complete contradiction of the first. Our author appeals to intuition, and, as he himself defines an intuitive truth to require that it should be "self-evident, universal, necessary,—so necessary that we cannot believe the opposite"—it can scarcely be said that his own definition harmonizes with the application of the principle to the Human Will.

He admits that Cousin, Sir Wm. Hamilton, Tappan, and others, differ from him. Cousin, for example, says : "Above my Will there is no cause to be sought ; the principle of causality expires before the cause in the Will ; the Will causes,—it is not itself caused." Can it, then, be said that the intuition of Dr. M'Cosh and Cousin are precisely the same in reference to the Will, or that the intuition claimed by the former is self-evident, universal, and necessary?

Our intuition declares to us that, whilst every effect must have a cause, every cause is not necessarily an effect. If it were so, God Himself must be an effect of some greater cause. On the contrary, our intuition teaches that there must be some self-existent cause, or there could have been no cause at all. It teaches us, also, that God could so constitute the Human Will that, whilst it derives its existence from Himself, it should resemble Himself in its Self-determining power. In fact, this follows, as a necessary sequence, from the natural laws of mind. We can conceive of nothing suited to the exercise of the faculties of the mind but such primordial power as we have discovered to exist in the Will. To suppose the Will to be dependent for its volitions upon

any cause beyond itself is to necessitate it ; but the assertion of the Freedom of the Will is by no means a declaration that the Will is uncaused. God, the Great First Cause, has constituted it Self-acting. Whilst it is dependent upon certain conditions, and can be responsible for its action only when the proper conditions are supplied, under all circumstances its responsibility ceases when its perfect power of choice ceases. In keeping this view in mind, we think it is not difficult to see the principle by which we can account for the introduction of Moral Evil in accordance with Providential Government.

Voltaire and Bayle contended that God was either unable or unwilling to prevent evil, and that the fact that evil was permitted to exist was a proof that He was either not infinite in power or not infinite in holiness. According to the necessitarian theory, in spite of all that Leibnitz and Edwards have said to the contrary, this must be admitted ; but, if we admit the Freedom of the Will, simply acknowledging the fact that it is no part of Infinite Power or holiness to necessitate human wills, we do not detract from Omnipotence to say that it cannot work contradictions. Omnipotence cannot cause a thing to be and not to be at the same time : so that,

when we speak of God's Power to prevent the sin of the world, we simply mean that God might have created man otherwise than free.

God can do everything within the range of necessity; but, having conferred upon man the gift of Freedom, and holding him responsible for his action, he must be bound by its consequences, so long as the gift continues. Whilst sin and virtue exist as possible to the human mind, there cannot be necessity. Virtue and sin end when necessity begins. Hence, to suppose that God could create a being incapable of sinning, and yet Free, is to suppose an impossibility. We can only be capable of sin or virtue to the extent that we are Free. Of course, man could be reduced to the mere animal, without those higher qualities by which he can be subject to moral government, and be capable of loving and serving God; but sin, virtue, and absolute Freedom, are correlative terms, and must ever stand and fall together. If, however, we will keep in mind the distinction between the Intellect, the Sensibility, and the Will, we can easily see how sin and holiness might exist without violating any principle of moral government; and it would not be more difficult to account for the sin of the first man than for

those of his descendants. The desire of the forbidden fruit was natural to the Sensibility; but it was in the power of the Will to reject it.

It is no reflection upon Divine Providence that God foreknew that man would sin. Foreknowledge does not necessitate action. "Actions of men do not come to pass because they are foreknown, but they are foreknown because they will come to pass." Foreknowledge forms a part of God's Omniscience, and has no necessary connection whatever with His Omnipotence.

We must consider the universe as a whole, and not some part of the machinery of Divine Providence. We must deal with what would be the result of God's plans if all were in perfect action, not with what it is amidst the derangements of sin. What is the tendency of the laws of the universe when properly obeyed? Would not our earth become a Paradise if universal man was conformed to the Will of Heaven? On the other hand, sad as our world is, it would be infinitely sadder if man were incapable of rising above the laws of necessity. God, who saw that angels and men would sin, saw that it was better that sin should exist in the universe than that there should be in it no Free Beings.

But we will now leave the question of Moral

Evil, and assume the fact that evil exists, and that sin abounds, with its terrible consequences. If we cannot settle the question of its introduction, we may form some conception as to the best means of its removal. Every plan that human ingenuity could devise has been tried, but none has proved successful. There is but one plan—the plan devised by God Himself—that can counteract the evil influences of sin. Had He wished to display to the world His infinite regard for man, His intense hatred to sin and misery, and, at the same time, to manifest His Divine attributes of justice and mercy, He could not have shown it more clearly than in the great scheme of human Redemption.

It would be fatal to any government to pardon transgressors on the mere condition of Repentance. There can be no righteous government unless the punishment of the transgressor bear some proportion to the offence; and, in a merciful government, the punishment itself ought to prove a discipline to the offender. This principle is illustrated in the highest possible degree in the Redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ. *He hath magnified the Law and made it honourable. Through Him God can be just, and the justifier of the ungodly,*

and holy whilst He takes sinners to His bosom.

Moreover, in Redemption, man is not only justified, but regenerated, sanctified, and made perfect in Christ Jesus, and, through the influence of the Spirit of Christ, amidst the conflicts of sin, he is enabled to form a character incalculably surpassing anything to which he would have attained had he never sinned. Or, as Chateaubriand has expressed it, "he may build his fallen temple with his own ruins." Nature is not more adapted to man's physical wants than Redemption to his spiritual necessities. There is evidence of the same Providence in each, and each alike bears marks of Infinite Wisdom and Beneficence.

We will take, for instance, the example of the Apostle St. Paul, as compared with the first man, to show the greatness of Redemption. How easily Adam fell; but behold the sublime elevation to which St. Paul rises when, amidst every peril and temptation, he could exclaim, *None of these things move me*, and that nothing could *separate him from the love of Christ*.

It has been asked, Why could not God have created beings like the Apostle Paul, or like the

angels? It seems very clear that a character great enough to stand amidst the conflict of earth and hell—such as God can calculate upon with certainty throughout eternity in heaven—can only be formed from the victories of redemption. Some of the highest angels fell; man created in the image of God fell. But *the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess it for ever.* Truly, the Son of God *hath glorified the Father upon the earth* by a greater manifestation of Divine glory than would have been possible if man had never sinned. God has not permitted sin. It is the *abominable thing that He hates*; but, seeing that it is a consequence of Freedom, He has, in His infinite wisdom and love, provided a sphere of action for the renewal and expansion of the mind, by which it can form a character which proves that, *as sin did abound, grace doth much more abound*; qualifying us for being *raised up to sit together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus: like Him, seeing Him as He is; and being for ever with the Lord.*

SECTION II.

*DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN RELATION TO
NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL LAW.*

It has been natural to man in all ages to believe in some unseen powers at work in the events of life; but, instead of supposing that these powers are working according to established Laws, adapted to specific ends, in connection with the laws of mind, many have been blinded by a gross Superstition, or enslaved by Fate over which they have thought they had little or no control.

The notions of a large number of persons in relation to Providence rise no higher than the caprice of imaginary supernatural agencies of which they have no distinct knowledge: many are haunted by a Pandemonium of evil spirits; others are continually expecting supernatural help from the most trivial circumstances of human life. We need not go to Heathenism for a belief in heathen superstition. Divination, Astrology, Charms, Incantations, Witchcraft, Necromancy, Dreams, the shapes of clouds, the flights of birds, the state of an animal's entrails, the rolling of the thunder, &c., have been re-

garded as prognostic of future good or evil. But a short time since, even in our own country, magical incantations were trusted for the cure of disease, for success in battle, for the fruitfulness of tillage, for the discovery of lost property, for uncharming cattle, for prevention of casualties : every day in the week had some peculiarity about it ; many sounds had some mystic meaning, and all natural and spiritual law was under the control of supernatural influences, having but little regard to the fundamental principles of physical and moral government.

Whilst superstition obtains to a great extent among the ignorant classes, the doctrine of Fate exists to an equal extent among the more intelligent classes. The tendency of great part of modern literature is towards Fatalism. "What is to be will be," is a very common expression. Large numbers believe in Divine Providence in the minutest affairs of human life. They delight in the thought that *a sparrow does not fall to the ground without God's notice, and that the very hairs of our head are numbered* ; but they believe that the most trivial events of life are so fixed that they have no more power over them than over the revolutions of our planet. They act on the principle either that they must

submit to the established laws of nature, which science has revealed to them, or to the fortuities of life, arising out of supernatural causes, over which they have no control. But we must ever remember that the uniformities of nature and the fortuities of life are alike under the control of the moral Governor of the Universe, the Father of Humanity. Natural and Spiritual Laws are alike immutable; but changing and erring man has need of the constant touch of the Divine finger to keep the machinery of human nature in harmony with His Laws. Providence is necessary because man is Free, and exists, not to adapt established Laws to Humanity, but to place within the power of erring human nature a supernatural power, by which it may fulfil all the requirements of Natural and Spiritual Law, in accordance with moral agency.

It is impossible to separate God from His works,—the Lawgiver from His laws. *In Him we live and move and have our being.* If He were to withdraw from our world for a single moment, under such a withdrawal, the universe would collapse. With God, natural and supernatural action are only higher and lower forms of the operation of the same law. It requires the same power to reproduce the seasons of the year

now as to order them at the first; the same forces to quicken spring and summer as to have originated them; the same God to enable man to breathe as first to have breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; the same strength to uphold worlds as to create them. A Particular Providence is only a General Providence centred upon some particular point, and both alike issue from Infinite Wisdom, Love, and Power.

The endeavour of Comte and his followers in this country to separate God from His works surely does not leave the works of God more complete. It cannot detract from the force of law to suppose a Lawgiver; it cannot lessen the evidence of cause and effect to acknowledge a Final Cause; it is impossible to add to the dignity of Nature by removing the God of Nature; and it cannot increase our confidence in the stability of the universe to believe that God has forsaken it, and abandoned it to general laws. On the contrary, it is the most comforting thought, amidst the inconstancy of everything human, that there is an Overruling Providence, and that He who made our world still watches over it with a Father's wisdom and tenderness.

Thus, the connection of God with His works

is two-fold—as Creating and Sustaining. The one implies the other. Hence He can exercise at any moment either the Creating or the Sustaining Power, and He is constantly adapting this power to the necessities of moral beings: hence there can arise no contingency of Human Life that is not provided for in His Natural and Spiritual Government.

Divine Providence is concerned wholly with the principles of Moral Government, and with the principles of the Human Mind; and its grand aim is to bring them into harmony. A mind that is not governed by principles must be distracted, and must consequently be weak. The relation of many minds to God is purely supernatural. They suppose that all the fortuities of life are regulated on their behalf. They neglect all ordinary laws, and yield themselves up to special Divine Interpositions. Hence they attain to no solidity of character, and no permanency of happiness. Their life is a constant alternation between joy and sadness, hope and disappointment, trust and doubt. When they realize their desires they are highly elated, but when they fail they are deeply depressed. They overlook the fact that the supernatural, as well as the natural, may be desired from purely

selfish motives ; but the primary object of Divine Providence is to raise the mind from temporal to spiritual interests, from present to future happiness. There are but few promises in the Bible relating to present happiness, except the happiness which arises from the formation of a holy character. Those nearest the eternal throne *came out of great tribulation* ; and, instead of the mere gratification of our desires, the great design of Providence is to mortify every carnal desire, and to form a character that can even *glory in tribulation*.

We cannot reconcile the great inequalities of Human Life with the assertion that *God is no respecter of persons*, except by the fact that God regards Character alone as of real importance. The saint is often poor and afflicted, whilst the sinner has *more than heart could wish*. We, on this account, sometimes murmur against Divine Providence ; but has God failed in any of His promises ? *He has chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised* ; but He has not promised to make us rich in this world's good. He has placed His Infinite resources at our command, *as touching the kingdom* : but it is so *hard for the rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven*, that

He who knows all things in mercy chooses those circumstances which will best contribute to the formation of the heavenly character.

There can be no difficulty in interpreting the leadings of Providence. God never points in more than one direction. To the sinner, only to the way of Repentance; to the saint, the path which will lead to the highest perfection. Our difficulty is seldom in finding God's way, but in so overcoming our own inclination as to be willing to walk therein. We imagine that Divine Providence is simply an engagement on the part of God to serve us, instead of the drawings of His grace into His holy service. We suppose that God provides for the gratification of our carnal desires, instead of providing for the mortification of the deeds of the body—the *crucifixion of the flesh, with its affections and lusts*; for our selfishness, rather than the exercise of a pure benevolence; for our temporal rather than our eternal happiness. Thus, whilst God is acting in accordance with the great fundamental principles, in connection with natural and spiritual law, by bringing us into harmony with His law, He brings us into fellowship with Himself; and, by constant intercourse with Him, and constant faith and love

towards Him, even the fortuities of life become perfect uniform laws of action.

SECTION III.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND HUMAN IMPROVIDENCE.

We must keep in mind that Divine Providence is Divine Aid to human freedom. God's power in Providence is manifest in removing obstructions, and in strengthening human effort, rather than in the exertion of power *ab extra*, apart from the natural exercise of man's Free Agency. God does not give us trees, but seed, and soil, and the power that quickens. As soon as we remove the sphere of Divine Providence from man himself to his surroundings, we are encompassed by inextricable difficulties, and moral government becomes incomprehensible. Were life to be estimated by its circumstances, and not by what is intrinsically good in man apart from his circumstances, it would be impossible to believe in Divine Providence. But God aims at one great object—namely, the development of the resources of our earth in connection with the great scheme of Redemption; and He has adapted His Pro-

vidential government to man's physical necessities only so far as they are of necessity, to a spiritual being. God does not esteem a man because he is great in this world, nor despise him because he is small ; but appoints the lot of every man where he is most required to act out the greatest purpose. He may be rich or poor, engaged in intellectual or manual labour, God will estimate him only by his faithfulness.

There are diversities of gifts, and differences of administration, but the same God who worketh in all. This diversity is necessary for the completion of the Christian Church, and the feeblest agencies are as necessary for the accomplishment of God's purposes as the strongest ; and, in many instances, *upon our uncomely parts God has bestowed the greatest honour.* It is important that there should be kings, but quite as important that there should be subjects ; that there should be ministers of state, but also that there should be tradesmen ; that there should be engineers, but also that there should be mechanics ; we cannot do without architects, but we could still less do without builders ; we need writers, we need quite as much printers ; men of science are valuable, but not more valuable than miners and labourers ; and the attainments

which are necessary to fit a man for one position would altogether unfit him for another.

No one would doubt God's right to give to one man one talent, to another five, and to another ten. If the former complain that he is not equal to the latter, might not the inferior animals complain that they are not equal to man, or the moon that it is not equal to the sun? The moon is better suited to its sphere than if it had been a sun; and if God gives only one talent, it is because only one is wanted. We receive no wrong because others are greater than ourselves, and God's estimate of us will be not the number of talents, but their right employment.

The same law will apply to the sufferings of life. The sole object of the present state being discipline, the probation upon which we are placed must be most perfect that will form the highest character. We are naturally unfit for any higher state than the present; and no change of circumstances could be of any use to us without a change of character. Sometimes it may seem that the conditions of Divine Providence are severe; but to ameliorate them is to lower the standard of excellence. Severe affliction and trial are but synonyms for a

higher standard of purity and strength. Many have learned in adversity what they could not learn in prosperity ; in affliction, what they could not in health ; in poverty, what they could not in wealth. " Even crosses from God's sovereign hand are blessings in disguise." A year of sunshine would be a year of famine to our earth. Vegetation grows more in a single week in cloudy weather than it does in a month in sunshine. It is the clear nights that are most frosty. The worst possible condition, viewed in relation to eternal blessedness, is infinitely grand as compared with the best possible condition apart from it. Any state with a prospect of heaven is inconceivably happy ; any state without it is inconceivably miserable : and that state is the highest here which will contribute most to the highest state hereafter. We often imagine what we should be under other circumstances ; but, if we view ourselves from God's standard, we shall be surprised to find how little God has denied us that is intrinsically good, or that possesses any value, apart from our imagination or selfishness.

Like the Origin of Evil, the question of human suffering has many difficulties. We are not Optimists or Pessimists. We believe that

it is the best possible world, as far as God is concerned, in connection with Human Freedom; and that there is not a single evil in it that God could have prevented in accordance with Moral Government; and we believe that the purifying and elevating influences at work in connection with Divine Providence will eventually raise it to the greatness and happiness for which it is destined.

But we would ask, How could God have prevented the greater part of the poverty, ignorance, and wretchedness of human life? On the same principle on which evil entered our world must be its continuance. We have shown that God has, as far as He is concerned, made every provision. There is material enough, wealth enough, and food enough, for every comfort. But man, being governed by Freedom, and not by Necessity, what can prevent the resources of our world from flowing into wrong channels, and being misappropriated by ignorant and selfish man? It is a law of Providence that indolence will reduce to poverty, and that extravagance will waste the greatest wealth. It is equally a law *that the diligent shall be rich*, and that the virtuous shall be happy. It is not the fault of God's

Providence, but of man's IMPROVIDENCE, that most men are poor and wretched. We presume that God could make every man happy, virtuous, and industrious; but He can only influence a Free Agent as far as his circumstances and character will admit.

God's Providence is as much over the drunkard as the sober man, the indolent as the industrious, the extravagant as the frugal, the sinner as the saint. *He maketh His sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and upon the unjust;* but the evil and the just are only susceptible of blessing according to their character. The sun shines alike, and the rain falls alike, upon the several fields of our country; but some parts are barren, others fruitful, others produce only weeds. The harvest, in many instances, cannot be produced, because none of its conditions have been fulfilled. All Providence can do for a free being is to give him the necessary faculties, and to place him in the best position for their exercise. Any influence beyond this ceases to be Providence, and becomes Necessity.

Many men refuse to labour, neglect their business, live beyond their income, give way to vice,

and the consequences are, failure, degradation, and misery. Yet we often hear them say, amidst their calamity, that they must submit to Providence. This is a misnomer. They do not submit to God's Providence, but to their own *improvidence*, and its natural consequences. Many neglect their health, violate all the laws of Human Nature, refuse to use the means of recovery: they become prostrate, and die. It is said that they must be resigned to the Will of God when they only suffer the penalty of their own folly. God's Will was that they should have exercised the common sense that He had given them, and that they should have enjoyed health, long life, and happiness.

Many of the calamities of life, which are called visitations from God, are, to a great extent, controlled by man. Many of the epidemics, so fatal in their consequences, are subject to human laws. From an official report, just issued, it is proved that proper sanitary measures have reduced the death rate in some places fifty per cent. There are instances in which *God's judgments have been abroad in the earth, that the inhabitants may learn righteousness*; but we too often ascribe to God what really belongs to the folly of man.

The present world is not intended as a place of Retribution, but of Probation—or only of retribution so far as that is necessary to probation. The sufferings of the transgressor in most instances bear no proportion whatever to the magnitude of the transgression. Many of the greatest crimes of our world have never received any righteous retribution. We cannot conceive of moral government without a belief in a future state of rewards and punishments; but we see sufficient retribution in this world to convince us that God's judgment slumbereth not, and that *sin shall not go unpunished*. We should, however, be careful not to attribute all the calamities to sin, nor to suppose that those who suffer are sinners above others. It is no proof of the baseness of the metal that it is cast into the fire; but rather of its intrinsic value, and that it is precious gold which can stand the fire. There need be no difficulty in distinguishing between the fires of the Divine wrath, punishing transgression, and the fires of Divine love, refining and moulding according to the Divine likeness.

We gratefully acknowledge God's Supernatural Power, ready to be called into exercise whenever we require His aid; but God's or-

dinary laws are sufficient for all the ordinary purposes of life, and there would be but few extraordinary occasions in life if we properly attended to its ordinary laws. The machine has frequently to be touched by the master's hand, because it is so frequently neglected. We have often rejoiced over some great deliverance, when, had we obeyed God's plain laws, we should never have been in danger. Many are insensible to the fact that they owe as much to God's natural, as to His Supernatural, Providence.

We must, however, avoid the materialistic tendencies of the age, which reduce natural law to temporal good. Comte, Hugo, Mill, and others, imagine that all that man requires is education, liberty, and the comforts of life; but we see, from multitudes around us, that these blessings produce very little moral elevation. Man has not fully obeyed the laws of his nature until he has fully obeyed the laws of God. All human legislation and reformation will fail unless it springs from the Divine Government, and from the Divine Life. The most perfect machinery of human invention will soon fail, and it is only as human laws are derived from Divine Laws, and as human action springs from

the Divine Will, that there can be universal peace and blessing among men.

The condition of the labouring classes is, no doubt, hard. They have to work too long to allow of time for improvement. It is a matter of thankfulness that the hours of toil are shortened ; but it is sad to remember how few improve the time that they possess. Holidays tend to greater immorality than working days. No man should work more than eight hours a day ; but most of the operative classes spend more time in sinful indulgence than would reduce the hours of labour to that average. The temporal condition of the working classes should be improved ; but, whilst they should be better educated, better housed, better fed and clothed, they require something higher than these before any real permanent change can take place. It is only as they know God's Providence, as seen in every provision for their body, and as seen in the great scheme of Redemption, that they can be truly blessed. They want the Divine Father to come to their desolate homes, to sympathise with their sorrow, and to help their weakness. They want to feel that they are not abandoned to the infirmities of human nature ; but that, whilst they

obey its laws, they may be brought into fellowship with the Infinite Father of Humanity, and *cast all their care upon Him who careth for them.*

Many fail to advance in their temporal and spiritual interests because they are out of their providential path. Through selfishness or wilfulness they have missed their way in life ; but, though they must necessarily suffer the loss arising from their past error, even now God's Providence is over the erring, and is willing to do for them all that Infinite Love and Wisdom can do. If they begin *to acknowledge Him in all their ways, He will still direct their paths.* More fail from want of believing in the conditions of Providence than fail from doubting Providence itself. It is no part of Providence to work miracles for our relief, when we persist in violating every principle of the Divine Government. The young especially have a life which may be guided by Divine Providence before them, and may, in every step, feel the leading hand of Infinite Wisdom.

“Better to weave in the web of life
A bright and golden filling,
And to do God's will with a ready heart,
And hands that are swift and willing,

Than to snap the delicate, minute thread
Of our curious life asunder,
And then blame Heaven for the tangled ends,
And sit and grieve and wonder."

In conclusion, we trace the working of Divine Providence in every step of the Divine Life. *The goodness of God leadeth us to Repentance.* He places us in the circumstances best calculated to produce a *broken and a contrite heart*—circumstances which will touch the tenderest chords, and most powerfully awaken the Conscience. In Faith, God's Providence reveals to the Spiritual eye those bright views of Redemption which will inspire our confidence, and enable us to *lay hold on eternal life*. In Conversion, and in all the progressive stages of the Perfect Life, God's Providence exposes to view the remains of the carnal mind, and unfolds *the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Peace*. In Preaching, God's Providence calls the right men into the Christian Ministry, and fills them with the Holy Ghost, and so instructs them as to enable them to *commend themselves to every man's conscience*. In Prayer, *helping our infirmities, and granting all our desires that are according to His will*.

Thus Providence adapts itself to all the

wants of our *Body, Soul, and Spirit*. Whilst it does not supersede natural law, it provides for all that the greatest utilitarian could desire ; but its greatest excellence consists in regulating our desires according to the standard of the higher Spiritual Life. Amidst all the vicissitudes of human life, God's Providence causeth *all things to work together for our good, making even the wrath of man to praise Him*, and forming the greatest earthly character from the greatest earthly tribulation. As we draw near the *valley of the shadow of death*, God will *Himself be with us, causing us to fear no evil* ; and as we approach the eternal world, He will say to us, *Well done, good and faithful servants ; ye have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things : enter into the joy of your Lord, and take eternal possession of the heavenly mansions which I have provided for you*.

THE END.

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